

POKER JIM



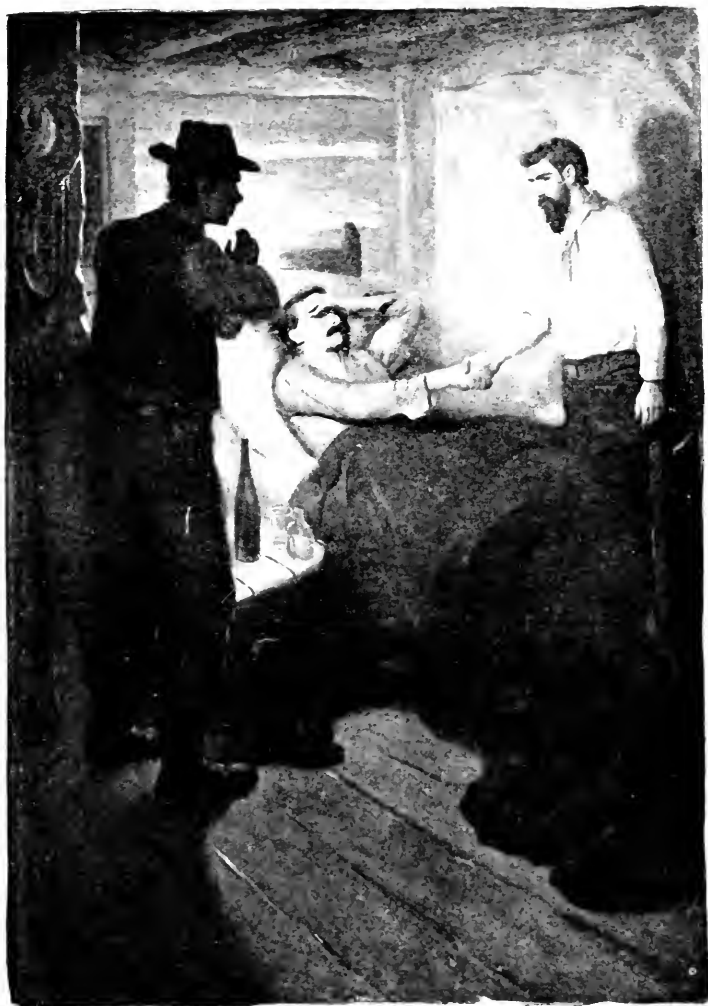
G. Frank Sydston



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"JIM, THIS YER'S DOC WEYMOUTH"

POKER JIM, GENTLEMAN

AND

Other Tales and Sketches

BY

G. FRANK LYDSTON



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To
The Most Indulgent of My Friends
And the Least Charitable of My Critics
This Book will Give Joy.
To Them I Dedicate It.
The Author

ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

It requires some assurance to step out of the conventional in story writing. Especially does it require courage on the part of one whose ideals of what a story should be are far beyond what his productions can ever attain. But the physician, who gets closer to things human than others do, may perhaps be forgiven unorthodox subjects and methods of expression. Surely, also, he will be excused for drawing upon his own field of work for his subject matter.

I have this to say of my material characters—they are all taken from life. Even Tommy the Outcast was the genuine article of hero. He crept into my life through a hole in my cellar window one furiously stormy night. He went out of it *via* a dose of poison, meant for his hereditary foes—the rats. Talk? No, he did not talk, but I'm sure he used to think—hard and often--and I fancy no one will upbraid me for trying in my feeble way to read

their dear old hands and listen to their oft told tales of the romantic early days of my native state.

I recently spent several hours at the house of a friend in San Francisco, watching the play of emotion on the wrinkled face of an aged Argonaut as he listened while our host and I were discussing the various characters of the story of Poker Jim. Needless to say, old time memories were revived in the mind of the poor old man. I shall never forget his tear dimmed eyes as he looked up at me and said, reverently, "Doc, I knowed 'em well—your pa, an' your gran'pa, an' Poker Jim an' all on 'em."

As I sit here in my quiet study harking back to my last trip to the mountains and valleys of Tuolumne and Calaveras, there appears before my mind's eye a picture of the old golden days brought down to the year 1900. In the foreground, at the door of his rude log cabin, stands that dear old octogenarian, "French Tom" of Tuolumne, gazing toward the green verdured hills on the opposite bank of the river, just where Moccasin Creek debouches into the swift running crystal waters of the Tuolumne. He shades his poor old eyes with his hand, and looks long and earn-

estly at a man who is slowly passing along the old Yosemite trail. When he reached the summit of the hill the man turned and stood limned against the brilliant morning sky, a ghost of happier days.

Long past three score and ten, bent and withered, crippled with the "rheumatiz," with pick on shoulder and pan and grub wallet by his side, "Dixie" was still pursuing the Golden Fleece. On the morrow—Sunday—Tom and Dixie would meet and talk it all over, and tell each other the same old wonderful lies of enormous golden finds, and "saltings" of the tenderfoot, that they had been exchanging since '49.

"Good luck, old pard!" and "The same to you!" were wafted gently down the beautiful valley to the heart-full wanderer who had come home after so many years.

Dixie vanished over the brow of the hill, and Tom dove into his tumble-down shack to prepare the breakfast of fish fresh from the river to which he had invited his doctor friend.

And the picture that my memory paints is no longer possible, for dear old Dixie has gone over the Divide, to dig for gold at the foot of eternal rainbows in the placers of the Great

Beyond. And I am glad that I went in quest of childhood's memories while it was yet time.

Out of the Valley of Shadows, Mnemosyne—most puissant goddess of them all—leads forth a procession of misty familiar shapes that bring the warmth of affection to my heart and the smile of welcome to my lips. And they smile back at me in that quiet way which friendly shadows have.

As the vague and unsubstantial forms flit silently past me from out the ivory portals where Memory's golden scepter holds undisputed sway, I recognize a host of my boyhood's friends; "Poker Jim", "Boston", "Toppy," "Big" Brown, "Yankee", "Jersey", "Link" Spears, Tom Chandler, Dave Smuggins, Ike Dessler, Bill Loveless, and many more of the bronzed, deep-chested, red-shirted, hair-triggered Knights of the Golden Fleece smile back at me from the ghostly file.

Last, but not least, comes my boyhood's hero, that Turpin of the border, "Three Fingered Jack" of Calaveras, who has been served up to us in so many and various forms of literary hash that I shall one day write his true history as a matter of pious duty.

G. FRANK LYDSTON.

POKER JIM, GENTLEMAN

POKER JIM, GENTLEMAN

It was in the spring of 1860, that the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania concluded to confer the degree of Doctor of Medicine upon your humble servant. Whether the faculty of that now famous school allowed me to graduate on the principle that actuated the performers in a western band, who implored their audiences not to shoot, as they were doing the best they could, I cannot say, but graduate I did, and as with all other students of medicine, it was then that my troubles began. I was not long in discovering that the piece of crisp parchment which the members of the faculty had endorsed as showing the scientific qualifications of William Weymouth, M. D. and which entitled him to practice medicine, was no open sesame to fame and prosperity.

My parents were at that time living in Kentucky, in a small town that offered little encouragement to a young man beginning practice. The confidence of one's old neighbors is of even slower growth than the beard for

which the young doctor yearns, as a badge of wisdom and learning that he who runs may read.

The country in which I spent my boyhood—I was born in the state of Maine—was even less inviting than the state of my adoption. It is possible that I entertained a little of my mother's prejudice against Yankeedom in those days. She was a native of Kentucky, and had never become thoroughly reconciled to the country to which my father had taken her soon after her marriage. It was in acquiescence to her homesick pleadings that my father finally moved to Kentucky, and settled in the little town wherein my parents lived for the rest of their days in such happiness as people of modest means can secure only among the warm hearted, generous people south of Mason and Dixon's line.

Had my home surroundings offered any inducements to the professional career I had planned for myself, I should certainly have returned home to practice. My parents were living alone, and my natural impulse was to return to them and do the best I could at practice, as long as they should live. It was with some twinges of conscience, therefore, that

I finally decided against going back to Kentucky to locate.

There were but three of us children, a brother, younger than myself, and a sister, two years older. My sister had married a gentleman from Memphis, and had long since gone to that city to live. My young brother had left home some years before I graduated, and no one knew what had become of him, much to my regret and to the sorrow of his parents, whose favorite, I must admit, the boy had ever been.

Jim had always been a wild lad, and was stamped as an incorrigible almost as soon as he could toddle alone. It was said that a little of the old strain of Indian blood, with which tradition had endowed our family, had cropped out in him. He was one of those rollicking, handsome dare-devils that everybody fears and loves at the same moment. The very sight of Jim's curly, black head and mischievous eyes struck the good neighbors with terror. Trouble was expected from the moment that boy put in an appearance—and the good folks were seldom disappointed. Sometimes they would acknowledge that "it might have been worse," but such occasions were rare.

But all who knew the curly headed little

rascal admitted that he possessed two excellent qualities; he was as brave as a lion and kind-hearted to a fault. He would fight at "the drop of the hat," and no boy ever heard him cry quits. He was as ready to split a cord of wood for a poor widow, as he was to tie a tin can to her house-dog's tail, and that's saying a great deal.

As the boy grew toward manhood, he fell in with evil associates, and as is always the case with boys of his peculiar disposition, he became thoroughly demoralized. Cards, whisky, horses and women—these were the unsubstantial foundation upon which rested the new world that his vicious companions opened up to him.

While living at the old home in Kentucky, I had always had a great controlling influence over little Jim, and even after I left home for college, I maintained a certain degree of influence over him. Gradually, however, our correspondence became infrequent, until we heard from each other only at very long intervals.

Knowing how much I thought of the lad, my parents never alluded to Jim's discrepancies in their letters to me. I have sometimes thought that possibly they were actuated to a certain degree by false pride; they did not care to expose the failings of their idol to his natural rival in

their affections—his brother. Whatever the explanation of the reticence of my parents may have been, I had no intimation of the true state of affairs until after the poor boy had fled from home, never to return.

It was the old story; a woman, a rival, a quarrel—ostensibly the outcome of a game of cards—the lie, a shot, and my young brother a fugitive. What a monotonous sameness there is in all such stories, to be sure. No one has invented a single new character or a single new situation in the play of passion, through all the ages. What new phases have the romanticists of the world added to human hopes, fears, sentiments, passions and vices in all the centuries? None—and yet the world demands originality of its authors!

It will be seen that I was between two fires, in deciding on my course after graduation—a sense of filial duty to my sorrowing and lonely parents, and a new-born professional ambition. As is usually the case, ambition conquered, and I decided to seek my fortune in new fields, far away from the paternal roof. California was, at that time, by no means a new sensation, but the novelty of the gold craze had not yet worn off. I had no particular ambition to seek my

fortune in foreign lands, and as the Pacific coast was to ambitious Americans still the El Dorado of all youthful dreams, I very naturally turned my thoughts in that direction. I was not long in coming to a decision, and after writing my plans to my parents, I made my arrangements to depart for San Francisco.

The choice of routes to California was a very simple matter, for one who was within easy access of the Atlantic sea board. There was no railroad communication with the Pacific coast in those days, hence I was compelled to select from the several ocean routes that which promised to consume the least time. With this idea I embarked at New York City for San Francisco, on a steamer of the Panama line, and, after a pleasant and uneventful voyage, arrived in San Francisco, the portals of promise through which so many hopeful Jasons had passed before me in search of the Golden Fleece.

The San Francisco gambling house was the common ground upon which the flotsam and jetsam of the early cosmopolitan population of the city met. The proprietors of the gambling hells certainly knew human nature thoroughly, judging by the variety of excitement.

which they provided. Every known game and every variety of liquor distinguished for its vital-reaching propensities, was at the disposal of their patrons, day and night. The boast of the gambling house keeper was, that he had thrown away his front door key the day the house was opened.

When the gambling fever struck the good citizen or unwary visitor from the mines, he could have his choice of a variety of remedies; monte, faro, roulette, poker—anything he pleased, providing he had his “dust” with him.

And do not imagine that the proprietors and dealers of the games were low-browed, ugly ruffians. Smooth, sleek and handsome were the nimble fingered gentry who attended to the wants of the fever-stricken fools who had more ounces in their pockets than in their brain-pans—until the fever was cured, when the loss of balance was in the other direction. Many a college education was wasted—or utilized, if you please—on the dealer’s side of a “sweat-cloth” in some of those dens. My fine gentleman would not swing a pick—unless it were an ivory one with which he could take away a sturdy miner’s golden ounces much more quickly

than the hapless fool had dug them with the implements of honest toil.

But the scene was an alluring one, nevertheless. The rattle of chips and dice; the ringing of silver and the clink of gold; the thud of the buckskin bags of gold dust as they were recklessly thrown upon the table; the duller, yet more portentous, shuffling of the cards; the whirl of the wheel where *rouge et noir* was being played, were entertaining to my ear, untrained as it was to such sounds.

"Come up and make your bets, gentlemen! The game is made! Five—eleven—eighteen—twenty—twenty-two—twenty-four—twenty-eight—thirty-one. Red wins!"—and the never ending procession of excited fools stepped up to diversion and disaster.

There was one thing the proprietors of those gambling houses forgot—they should have had a suicide room and an undertaking department. It would have saved the city fathers a deal of trouble in the disposal of the large crop of unknown remains that the morning light disclosed in obscure corners of the city—poor fugitives from self; victims of dens where Venus, Momus, Terpsichore and Bacchus grovelled in the dirt yet held undisputed sway.

There was a grim irony, and yet, withal, a tinge of comedy, in the farewell treat of fiery liquor with which the management bowed out its ruined guests—bowed them out of the den of iniquity and into a slough of despond from which they oft-times never emerged—on this side of eternity.

I was standing one evening in "The Palace"—a gambling den with the usual appurtenances of tributary and dependent vice—curiously watching the movements of the dealer at one of the numerous faro games. Every table was crowded with players and surrounded by spectators, some of whom, like myself, were mere curiosity seekers, but most of them being devotees of the shrine of the goddess, Chance, who were impatiently awaiting the occurrence of a vacancy at the table—when a bankrupt player should make way for fatter victims.

Sitting just opposite the dealer was a young lad, who could not have been more than seventeen years of age, betting away with a recklessness that would have done credit to a millionaire. The youngster was evidently flushed with liquor and laboring under the highest degree of excitement.

Standing just behind the boy, was a woman

—evidently of the under world—who, it was easy to see, was influencing his betting. Whether this creature was giving direct advice and encouragement or not, I cannot say, but the lad was certainly trying to appear as brave and recklessly extravagant as possible, for the apparent purpose of impressing the woman. The furtive glance which the dealer exchanged with his charming “capper” now and then, was sufficient to enable even one of my limited experience, to form a correct conclusion as to the status of affairs.

Just opposite me and almost directly behind the dealer, stood a man who, I was certain, had been studying my face from time to time ever since I had taken my place among the spectators of the game. A stealthy glance at my *vis à vis* when he happened to be watching the boy’s playing—which seemed to be dividing his attention with myself—revealed a person of most striking appearance and unique individuality.

Apparently about twenty-five years of age, judging by his heavy black moustache and mature development; a tall, athletic figure; long curling locks of jet black hair hanging loosely down over his shoulders; eyes as black

as sloes and as piercing as those of a hawk—the stranger was indeed a handsome and most picturesque character. His closely buttoned coat of fashionable cut, small, neat boots, and surmounting all, his broad-brimmed hat, made him even more striking, if possible. I glanced at his hands and noted that they were well formed, and of a color that indicated both gentility and a life in which manual labor bore no part.

As I stole a second glance at the handsome stranger, our eyes met, and I fancied that he started slightly. He glanced away quickly, but as the boy in whom he appeared to take such an interest was apparently getting pretty near the end of his funds, I concluded that the unknown's emotion—if indeed he had really displayed any—was due to the evident bad luck of his unconscious *protégé*. It was plain to me that he was interested in the boy, for there was an expression about the corners of his mouth, and an almost tender gleam in his eyes, that could not be mistaken by any one who possessed even a fair ability in character reading.

I knew not why the picturesque stranger interested me, but there seemed to be some indefinable attraction about him, which caused me to forget the game and watch him as closely

as I could without risk of giving offense. As our eyes met, I experienced a peculiar sense of mutual recognition, and yet it was seemingly impossible, or at least, highly improbable, that we had ever met before.

But the occurrences of the next few minutes entirely diverted my mind for the time being from the question of recognition.

The poor, foolish boy soon exhausted his money, and vacated his place at the unholy altar. I saw him whisper to the female, in whose company he evidently was, and apparently request her to step aside with him. She did so, and they stood for some time in earnest, confidential discussion of a subject which their gestures made all too apparent. The bird was plucked, his charms were gone, and he was not only refused a "stake" wherewith to possibly retrieve his losses, but the light of his first romance was extinguished forever—or until he had procured more money, which, to the woman's mind, probably amounted to the same thing.

The expression on that poor boy's face was a horror and a sermon both in one. As the woman coldly and haughtily swept away from him, her tainted skirts swishing suggestively

and ominously over the floor, gathering up tobacco and other filth which was purity itself beside her harpy-like soul, the lad stood gazing after her as if in a dream. He was stunned into obliviousness to everything but the realization of his disaster.

He stood for a moment as though incapable of motion, then with an expression of desperation in his eyes, and a countenance that was the typification of utterly hopeless despair, he passed through the green baize doors out into the night—his first black night of fathomless woe and absolute demoralization.

I had watched the boy from the time we left the table, and his expression, as the hawk that had plucked away his youthful plumage flew away from her victim, at once appealed to my young professional eye. I made my diagnosis almost intuitively, and instinctively started to follow the lad, as quickly as I could without attracting his attention. As I turned toward the exit, I caught a glimpse of some one just passing out. As the doors swung back before him, I recognized the stalwart form of the picturesque unknown.

I breathed a sigh of relief, and strolled leisure-

ly along after the stranger. I do not know why, but I felt that the boy was safe. I was sure I could not be mistaken in my interpretation of the play of emotions that had animated the stranger's face, as he watched the game which had ruined the poor lad whom he was evidently following.

I soon saw that I was right. The stranger caught up with the boy just as he stepped into the brilliant light that illuminated the sidewalk in front of the gambling den. Placing one hand upon the boy's shoulder, he gently but firmly halted him, I meanwhile drawing back into the shadow of the outer door of the Palace, determined, with the best of motives, to see the thing through.

"Don't be frightened, my lad," said the man, "I just want to say a word to you, that's all."

The boy looked at him as though dazed for a moment, and then replied slowly:

"I'm not frightened, sir. You're not apt to do anything worse to me than I've already done to myself. My money is all gone, and you can't do any more than kill me, if you don't want money. As for killing me,—well, I have more lead than gold left, and I've not forgotten how my father taught me to die, like a gentleman."

I fancied that the boy looked quite the hero as he spoke. There was a little touch of the southron born about him that brought my Kentucky home back to me. I had seen such boys there, and I knew—well, there was one who was something like that, whom I would have given the world to see, and my heart went out to that poor, unfortunate lad. And, yet, for some reason, I had an even kinder feeling for the man who was evidently going to act the friend and adviser of our mutual *protégé*.

“Pardon me for even suggesting that you might be frightened,” said the unknown, “but you are young; San Francisco has some queer ways and still queerer people, and it’s not every man who gets the drop on you who means well. I am free to say that I should be uneasy myself, were I to be similarly accosted, and they say I am—well, that I’m ‘no chicken’, you know. Where are you from, my boy?”

“I’m from Virginia, sir,” replied the boy, straightening up with a little of the Old Dominion pride, I thought.

“Ah!” exclaimed his new-found friend, “I was sure I detected a little of the old cavalier strain in your face. What is your name, may I ask?”

"Gordon Cabell, sir."

"Well, Master Cabell, I know your breed pretty well; I'm from—well, I've met southern boys before. Now, I'm going to talk plainly to you, and you mustn't be offended. I'm going to be your friend, for to-night, at least, and you must listen to me.

"I'm not going to give you a moral lecture on gambling or liquor drinking. I presume that the Gordons, Cabells, and many more of your ancestors, have played cards, drunk whisky, raced horses, attended cock fights, and fought duels, and have done many other things that people with colder blood object to, but they did all these things like gentlemen, I'll warrant you. Now, tell me, young fellow, did you ever know of a Cabell doing what you have done, and still worse, what you were going to do to-night?"

"Sir!" said the boy indignantly, reaching toward his pistol, "I will—"

"Oh, no you won't, Master Cabell. Look me in the eye, please!" and the boy gazed at the stranger wonderingly, as he drew his tall form up to its full height, calmly folded his arms, and looked down upon him.

"I have already told you that I am your friend,

Gordon, and the Cabells do not make targets of their friends. Give me your pistol, sir!"

The boy almost mechanically drew his pistol from the holster beneath his loose-fitting coat, and obeying the mandate of a will more powerful than his own, handed it to his companion.

"Thank you, Gordon," said the stranger, "I'll return it to you presently.

"Now, my boy, let us get to business. You have fallen among thieves, and have been plucked, like the unsuspecting, foolish pigeon that you are. I don't want to know your past history; life is too short, but I do want a hand in your future.

"You are the scion of aristocratic stock. Your ancestors before you were worshippers at the shrine of beauty, but it was the beauty of purity and virtue. You have been dragging your family pride down into the dirt, and offering up your young soul upon an altar which a true son of the Old Dominion should loathe. You have squandered your money trying to beat a game that's a 'dead-open-and-shut' against you. You are listening to one who knows whereof he speaks, I assure you, my boy.

"Not satisfied with what you had already done, which after all is easily remedied, you

were about to stain your family name and record with a crime that nothing on earth could ever wipe out. You were about to kill—a fool, Gordon, who may yet be made a wise man.

“I once knew a boy who played the fool—much as you have done—and who is still expiating his folly. He might eventually have done as you were about to do, only he happened to be compelled to—well, he didn’t shoot himself, that’s one thing to his credit, although his family, and not himself, was perhaps the gainer by it, or will be sometime, if the truth is ever known. He couldn’t avoid the other—there was nothing about that of which he had cause to be ashamed, although the world, that knows not the circumstances, thinks differently.

“Now, Gordon, I’m going to stake you. Don’t say no—it is a loan if you please, or anything you choose to call it. Take this, and get out of this hell-hole of a town as quick as the Lord will let you.”

The boy stood for a moment with the tears streaming down his cheeks, and then hesitatingly took the proffered bag of dust.

“And you will really let me pay it back to you, sir, when I am able?”

"I certainly will, if we ever meet again, replied the man. "As I have already told you, my boy, I know your breed; it is not the kind that likes to remain under obligations to one who is an entire stranger. But, after all, your honorable intention clears the obligation.

"And, Gordon, here's your pistol. I think it will be safer in your hands than it was a short time ago. And now I am going to give you a few parting words of advice.

"In the first place, young fellow, don't gamble. If your blood is too red to heed this admonition, learn to play poker. It's a scientific game and a square one, usually—always so among gentlemen. Never bet against another man's game, nor play against a percentage. Gambling games of that kind are like the play of life, the percentage is in favor of the dealer, and it fetches you sooner or later.

"In the second place, young man, set up a shrine in your heart, and worship female purity and virtue; then you are safe. If you have a mother or sisters, don't forget that a woman who is not fit for their society is not worthy of your regard.

"Youthful affection, my boy, is not inexhaustible. Keep it for future reference—and

worthy objects. You may yet live to wish that the worldly heart of to-morrow were the young and fresh one of yesterday.

"And now, I must leave you. Good-night, my boy, and don't forget what I have said to you."

"But, sir," cried the lad, "your name, who shall I—?"

His benefactor had disappeared in the darkness.

The boy stood for a time gazing blankly into the night in the direction in which the stranger had disappeared; then, drawing himself up proudly, as became a son of fair Virginia, he placed the bag of gold in his pocket and his pistol in its holster, cast a scornful glance toward the windows of the Palace and strode resolutely away.

A few days after the scene at the gaming house, I chanced to meet an old time friend of my father's, hailing from Maine. Mr. Allen, it seemed, had "struck it rich" and was on his way back to the "States." From this gentleman I received a glowing account of the wealth of the placer mining region in Tuolumne county, which at once determined my future course.

When he informed me that the country where he had made his "pile" was not only rich in gold, but badly in need of doctors, I decided that Tuolumne should have at least one medical celebrity.

Investing some of my greatly diminished capital in an outfit which I thought might harmonize to a certain extent with the new field for which I was about to depart, I bade farewell to San Francisco and set my face toward the fame and the pot of gold that lay at the foot of the rainbow of my dreams.

It was a calm sultry evening in the month of July, 1860, that I embarked on board a steamboat plying between San Francisco and Stockton, the latter city being the gateway to the wonderful country distinguished by its wealth and scarcity of doctors, so graphically described by my friend, Mr. Allen.

The trip up the Sacramento river, although pleasant enough, had very little novelty about it, and I confess that I at first experienced a feeling of disappointment at the lack of entertainment which the scenery afforded.

Our route lay for a comparatively short dis-

tance up the Sacramento, the major portion of my journey being comprised by one of its tributaries—the San Joaquin—a stream that is insignificant enough during the dry season, but which in the early spring is formidable enough to those who live sufficiently near the river to get the benefit of its overflow during the spring freshets.

The San Joaquin river is, without doubt, the crookedest navigable stream in the world. There was never a snake that could contort himself into so fantastic an outline as presented by that lazily meandering branch of the Sacramento. So crooked is it, that one entertains a constant dread of running ashore; the bank is always dead ahead and unpleasantly near.

This serpentine river traverses a perfectly level plain throughout the navigable part of its course, its banks being flanked by tule beds which extend farther than the eye can see. Indeed, the valley of the San Joaquin is one vast bed of tules, extending fully one hundred and fifty miles. When, as sometimes happens during the dry season, the tule beds take fire, the spectacle, especially at night, is at once grand and terribly impressive. I remember on one occasion taking a night trip up the river during one

of these fires. The scene in the vicinity of Monte Diablo, was one of the most majestic and awe inspiring I have ever witnessed. The name of "Devil's Mountain" seemed singularly appropriate

It was nearly three in the morning when I arrived at Stockton, and, as there was nothing to be gained by going ashore, I remained on board the boat, determined to get the full benefit of a morning nap. It seemed to me that I had just closed my eyes, when I was awakened by the yelling of the roustabouts and stage agents on the wharf. I had barely time to dress, hustle ashore and hurriedly swallow a cup of coffee, before my stage was ready to start, and I was off for Jacksonville—the particular town of Tuolumne county that I had determined to favor with my medical skill and fortune-hunting ambition.

There was nothing pleasant about that stage ride—it was memorable only for its inconveniences and its motley load of passengers. A hot, dusty, bumping journey in the old time California stage makes pretty reading as Bret Harte has described it but I am free to say that the reality was not so enjoyable. The red dust of the California stage road gets into a fellow's

system so deeply that his ideas are likely to be of a practical or even profane sort, even though he be normally quite sentimental.

Picturesque, however, the ride certainly was. Several red-shirted, rough-bearded miners, lent just the right touch of local color, while the imitation frontiersman—of whom I was the type—was sufficiently well represented to afford a suitable foil for the genuine article, as typified by my brawny-chested, be-pistoled, unkempt fellow passengers.

In one corner of the stage was a little chap who was evidently what we would call a dude nowadays. This young gentleman had done his level best to put a bold front on matters, by rigging himself out like a cowboy. The result was somewhat ludicrous, as may be imagined. Nor was the poor little idiot by any means unconscious of his features of incongruity—he realized most keenly the absurdity of his position and the fact that he was being guyed. The miners, however, seemed to enjoy the situation immensely.

“Say, pardner,” said one tawny-bearded giant, leaning toward the innocent, and startling him so that his eye glasses nearly dropped

off his nose—"Gimme a pull at yer pistol, wont ye?"

"Ah, beg pawdon, sir, what did you say?" stammered the dude.

"W'y I s'posed you could understan' th' English langwidge," replied the miner, "but seein' ez how ye don't, I'll translate her to ye. I asked ye ter give me a pull at yer whisky bottle."

"Ah, really," said the innocent, "I'd be chawmed, you know, doncher know, but I don't carry the article. In fact, sir, I nevah drink."

"Ye don't say so? Well, I want ter know!" answered the miner. "Now, see hyar, sonny, seein' ez how you aint got no whisky, jest gimme a chaw uv terbacker an' we'll call it squar'."

"I—aw—I'm sorry to say that I don't use tobacco, sir."

"Sho! g'long, young feller! Is—that—so? How the h—l d'ye keep a goin'? Whut d'ye do fer excitement—p'raps ye plays poker, eh?" said the stalwart son of the pick.

"Oh no!" exclaimed the tenderfoot in dismay, "I nevah play cards!"

"Ye don't tell me!" replied the miner. "Well,

well, well! By the way, young feller; be keerful not ter lose 'em—ye mout need 'em ter git home with."

"Need what, sir?" asked the victim.

"Yer wings!"—and the miners broke out in a huge guffaw that bade fair to dislocate a wheel of the stage, and impelled the driver to look anxiously and inquiringly at his passengers.

The tenderfoot collapsed and remained in a state of complete innocuousness until he arrived at his destination, which, fortunately for his sensitive organization, happened to be the first town where we changed horses. As he minced gingerly away toward the hotel, the miners winked at each other most prodigiously. Happening to catch the big fellow's eye, by a happy inspiration I was impelled to wink also. This at once established me on a friendly footing with my rough companions, and, as I happened to have a bottle of fairly good liquor with me, the rest of the way into the regard of those simple miners was easily traversed.

During the conversation that naturally followed the unconventional formation of our acquaintance, the big-bearded fellow, who appeared to be the leader of the little party of miners,

following the blunt fashion of the country, suddenly remarked:

"By the way, stranger, whut might yer name be, an' whut part uv the diggin's might yer be headin' fer?"

"Well," I replied smilingly, "it is about time we introduced ourselves, isn't it? My name is William Weymouth, recently of Kentucky, a doctor by profession, and bound for Jacksonville, where I contemplate digging gold when the weather will permit, and practicing medicine when it will not."

"A doctor, an' bound fer Jacksonville, eh? Well, Doc," said my new acquaintance, reaching out his grimy paw with a cordiality that could not be mistaken, "I'm d—d glad ter know ye! Jacksonville is our town, an' a h—l uv a good town she is at that, y'u bet! We're jest gittin' back from Frisco, an' doin' it on tick, too. We've been doin' the sport racket down yonder, an' I reckon the sports hev done us, eh, pards?" His "pards" having acquiesced, my brawny friend cut off a huge chew of "nigger heel," stowed it away in his capacious cheek, and after a few preliminary expectorations that resembled geysers, continued:

"If it hadn't been fer ole Tom McDougal

up thar on the box, we'd a took Walker's line back ter our claims"—and the big miner glanced gratefully in the direction of the generous Mr. McDougal.

"And now that I have found that you are to be my fellow-townsmen," I said pleasantly, "permit me to remind you that the introduction has been one-sided. What are your names, may I ask?"

The miner winked at his companions, laughed a little deep down in his huge red beard, and replied:

"D—d if I didn't fergit that ther was two sides to the interdoocin' bizness. Ye see, stranger, we aint payin' much attention ter feller's handles in the mines. Most enny ole thing 'll do fer a name. That's why we sometimes fergits our manners. This yere gang is purty well supplied with names, but ye mightn't hev sich good luck ev'ry time, 'specially in Tuolumne county, eh, pards?"

His "pards" having again nodded and winked their approval, my brawny friend proceeded with his introductions.

"I'm called in the diggin's by sev'ral names an' y'u kin do like the rest uv my frien's—take yer pick. I'm mostly known as Big Brown,

tho' some folks calls me Big Sandy. When I was in the states, I b'lieve they used to call me Daniel W. Brown, but I wouldn't swar to it. This feller nex' ter me hyar, is the hon'able Mr. Dixie,' or Snub-nose Dixie fer short, who aint never hed much ter say about his other name, if he ever had enny, eh, Dixie? That lantern-jawed cuss a settin' long side uv y'u, is Deacon Jersey, utherwise an' more favor'bly known ez Link Spears. We calls him Deacon, cuz he never was inside of a church in his hull life. He's the only genooine deacon this side of the Sierras. Thar aint none uv the hyper-crit' erbout him, neither, I kin tell ye. Ye'll find us fellers' tastes kinder runs erlike, f'r instance,"—and Big Brown looked longingly in the direction of my "pistol" pocket.

"In the matter of thirst," I suggested.

"Right y'u air, Doc! I kin see yer goin ter be a valooable addition to our diggin's. We need a doctor ez kin tell whut's the matter with a feller 'thout cuttin' him wide open. Ye see, we likes ter keep our own han's in, an' don't calkerlate ter leave much of the cuttin' ter the doctor—ennyhow, 'till we've had our little innin's, eh, boys?"

Once again the boys agreed, with, I thought,

just a slight suspicion of gratified vanity in their expressions.

It was a long weary way to Jacksonville, but my time was well spent. Thanks to the kindness and garrulity of my new-found yet none the less sincere, friends, and the confidence engendered by my rapidly diminishing supply of stimulants, I found myself, by the time I arrived at my destination, fairly well acquainted with the town, its ways and its citizens.

Jacksonville, at the time I landed in the then thriving place, was one of the most noted mining centers in the placer country. Its location was most picturesque. Nestled among the foot-hills of the glorious Sierras on the banks of the Tuolumne river, and peopled by as cosmopolitan and heterogeneous a population as was ever gathered within the confines of one small town, my new home was attractive because of its novelty, if nothing more.

Ages and ages of alternately falling and receding waters, centuries of snow and enormous rainfalls, had washed down from the mountains into the valley of the Tuolumne, those auriferous particles, the great abundance of which had made Jacksonville spring

into busy life and thriving prosperity, almost in a single day.

But the very elements which had laid the alluring foundation of the valley's wealth, were even then conspiring to avenge the rifling of the rich deposits of the valley by the irreverent hands of the modern Argonauts.

The Tuolumne river was a variable stream. During the dry season, it was but a thin, disjointed, silvery ribbon, across which one could walk dry-shod, in places. But in the early spring, the little stream at which the wayfarer was wont to laugh, and in whose bed the eager miner delved with impunity and profit, took revenge upon the disturbers of its ancient course. It became a raging torrent, resistlessly carrying all before it and sometimes severely punishing for his temerity the unwary miner who had pitched his tent or built his rude cabin too near the river bank. But all the revenge which the Tuolumne had taken in all the years since the settlement of the valley, was as nothing to that which was yet to come. That vale of thrift, industry and smiling prosperity was destined to become a valley of death, destruction, desolation and ruin.

But were not Pompeii and Herculaneum,

and in later days, our own San Francisco, joyful and unsuspecting to the last? And why should the people of Tuolumne dread a danger of which familiarity and fancied security had made them forgetful, or possibly even contemptuous. The average citizen of Jacksonville could calmly face death in a material form, and why should he concern himself with that which passed by upon the other side with each succeeding spring?

By no means the least attractive feature of Jacksonville was the rugged self-confidence and honesty of the majority of its people. Even the Chinese, who composed a large part of the population, seemed to be a better variety of the almond-eyed heathen than I had supposed could possibly exist. The hair-triggered sensibility and powder-and-ball ethics of the dominant race seemed to be most effective civilizers.

I am far from claiming that Jacksonville presented an ideal state of civilization, but this I do say, in justice to my old town; life and property were safer there than they are to-day in many more pretentious communities, that claim to rank as centers from which civilization radiates like the rays of a star. A

sense of personal responsibility made the French the politest nation on the face of the earth; it was the foundation upon which the spirit of the "Old South" was builded firmer than a rock; it was the soul that beat back the furious waves of shot and shell that so often hailed upon the southern chivalry on many a hard fought field. A similar spirit of self-assertion and personal responsibility pervaded the Tuolumne valley, and raised its average moral standard to a height far beyond that of many a metropolis of a more vicious and effete civilization.

Warm-hearted, impulsive, honest, courageous, fiery-tempered, quick-triggered Argonauts of the Tuolumne valley—a health to those of you who still live, and peace to those who have laid down the pick and pan forever and have inspected their sluice-boxes for the last time! When the final "clean-up" comes, may the "find" be full of nuggets—"sixteen dollars to the ounce."

There was no better opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with the town of Jacksonville, its people and its customs, than was afforded by the Tuolumne House, where I made my headquarters. There may be better

hotels in the world than that primitive one, but it had outgrown its canvas period and had become a pretentious frame structure, and this fact alone made it famous. It had no rival, for the old "Empire," so long presided over by that honest, sturdy old Scot, Rob McCoun, had long since been converted into a Chinese grocery, while its erstwhile owner had been dead for several years. As for the only other hotel, McGinnis, its proprietor, had never been in the race since his cook, one unlucky day, brewed the coffee and tea simultaneously in the same pot. The hundred and seventy-odd boarders who fed at McGinnis' "festive" rack were not to be consoled—they "quit him cold" and went over to the enemy. Tradition says that "Mac." half killed the luckless cook, one Mike Corcoran, "Fer puttin' coffee in the tay pot, ther d—d scoundrel!" but the boarders were not to be placated.* My fellow citizens of Jacksonville were very particular, and quite sensitive, with respect to the quality and quantity of liquids that entered their stomachs.

The material comforts of the Tuolumne House aside, there was never a cheerier, heartier, pluckier boniface than George Keyse. He

*Axin' Mr. McGinnis' pardon—if he be still living.—Author.

was to the manner born, and could take a gun or a knife away from an excited boarder quite as gracefully and quickly as he could, if necessary, turn his own flapjacks.

Mr. Keyse had an invaluable assistant in one Dave Smuggins, who officiated alternately as barkeeper, porter and hotel clerk. Smuggins was a well-bred man, and, it was said, was originally educated for the ministry. The only evidence at hand, however, was certain oratorical propensities that overcame him and made him forget his real position when he awakened the boarders early o' mornings. I can hear him now, as he stood at the top of the stairway, yelling in stentorian tones—"Arouse all ye sleepers, an' listen to the purty little airy birds singin' praises tew the Lord! D—n yer bloody eyes! Git up!" saying which the modern psalmist discreetly went below and took his position behind the bar, ready to dispense "eye-openers" to the early caller.

Jacksonville proved to be not only a pleasant place of residence but an excellent field for my professional work. The climate was almost germ-proof, and it was a real pleasure to practice the semi-military surgery characteristic of my field of labor. Primary union was my speciality in

those days, and I used to get results the memory of which sometimes makes me blush for those I occasionally get with our modern aseptic and antiseptic methods. No matter how much my patients might shoot or carve each other, any fellow who had life enough left in him to crawl or be carried off the field of battle, usually got well.

Beyond accompanying an occasional prospecting party, largely for recreation but partly in my professional capacity, I did but little in the way of mining. My practice gave me plenty to do, and was lucrative enough as practices go, so I soon settled down to as routine a life as my curious and lively surroundings would permit.

I was sitting in that portion of the Tuolumne House yecept by courtesy "the office," quite late one evening, listening to the quaint talk of my miner friends and marvelling on the quantity of fluid the human body could lose by way of expectoration and still live, when I was recalled to a realization of the fact that I was a practitioner of medicine, by a voice at the hotel door.

"Say, Doc, kin I see y'u a minute?"

Looking up I saw standing in the doorway

one of the boys, who was familiarly known as Toppo, his States' name being Ike Dexter. Toppo motioned for me to come out on the porch, and impressed by his gravity of manner and earnestness of gesticulation, I hastened to comply.

"What is it, Toppo?" I asked.

"Well," he said, "thar's one uv my friends whut's bin an' got hisself hurt, an' I want y'u ter come an' fix him up. He's a very parti'cler friend, an' I'd like ter hev yer do yer best on him. Ye needn't say nuthin' ter the boys about it, jes' now, Doc."

"Very well, Toppo, I'll go with you, but what kind of an accident has befallen your friend?" I asked.

"Oh, I dunno ez ye could jes' call it a accident, Doc. It's jest a little shootin' scrape, that's all, an' I reckon ye'd better take some 'stracters erlong."

In accordance with the honest miner's suggestion I did take some bullet extractors with me.

"Ye see, Doc," said Toppo, by way of preparatory explanation of the case I was about to see, "this yere friend of mine hez bin down in 'Frisco fer a spell, an' might hev staid thar

a good while longer, only some feller picked a row with him. Thar wuz a duel, an' duels ain't so pop'lar down 'Frisco way ez they useter wuz, 'specially when somebody gits hurt. A real bad accident happened ter th' uther feller, an' he passed in his checks. Jim—that's my friend—got a ball in his thigh, whut stuck thar, and ez he didn't hev much time to hunt fer a doctor, he jest come up hyar, whar its kinder quiet like, an' we thort we'd hev y'u sorter look arter the thing. Ye see, Jim won't keer to git 'round much fer a few weeks—not 'till that little accident gits blowed over"—and Toppy's eyes gleamed humorously.

My friend led me down to the river bank, and pushing aside a clump of willows revealed a small, rudely constructed row-boat.

"Ah!" I said, as I took my seat in the somewhat insecure-looking and cranky little craft, "It is evident that you have taken your friend to your own cabin."

Toppy, as I well knew, had the only abode on the opposite bank of the river, where, high up on the hill-side, in full though somewhat distant view of the little town, he had built a small but neat cabin, which nestled in the bosom of the hill, looking not unlike a

child's playhouse as seen from the town proper.

"Yep," replied the miner, "thar's whar he is. It aint best ter depen' too much on pop'larity, ye know, Doc, an' Jim'll be a little safer over thar than in town. Nobody goes ter my place—less'n I invite 'em," and Toppy grinned sardonically.

I recalled the fate of a poor devil who did go to his cabin without an invitation—from Toppy—in the early days of his housekeeping on the hillside, when a more or less charming little Mexican half-breed damsel was said to have presided over Toppy's domestic affairs.

Being averse to the discussion of other people's family matters, I had never conversed with my miner friend on that delicate subject. To tell the truth, there seemed to be very little encouragement for gossip in Jacksonville—town-talk was too direct a cut to the little collection of white head-boards that decorated a small plateau just outside the town. All my information on such subjects, was therefore derived from more subtle and less dangerous airy rumor.

The river was quite low, and a few vigorous pulls from Toppy's stalwart arms brought us to the opposite shore, from which I could see,

far up the hillside, the gleaming white walls of the miner's rude little home, where lay my prospective patient.

Toppy was notoriously careless in his personal grooming, but the little half-breed had evidently inspired a coat of whitewash for the cabin, that endured longer than the sentiment with which its owner had inspired that swarthy little traitress. Possibly that gleaming white cabin was her monument—who knows? The river ran dangerously and temptingly near, considering how short a time it takes to fall a few hundred feet down a steep and rocky hillside, and rumor whispered that Pepita—well, no one knew where she was, and women were not so plentiful in the Tuolumne valley that hiding was easy.

But the Tuolumne kept its secret well, if secret there was. Its quick-sands told no tales. They could hide the precious gold of the river bottom; why not a mouldering skeleton?

On entering Toppo's cabin, completely winded after my climb up the hill that constituted his front yard, I found my new patient lying on a cot in the middle of the room. He turned inquiringly toward the door as his

host and I entered, and what was my amazement to see reflected in the dim light of the candle with which the cabin was illuminated, the features of the handsome unknown of the San Francisco gambling-house, whose adventure with the unfortunate young southerner I have already related. The recognition was evidently mutual, but I fancied that my patient looked at me with an expression slightly suggestive of annoyance.

Topsy's introduction was laconic, and as characteristic as was he himself:

"Doc, this is Jim—Jim, this yer's Doc Weymouth, an' he's all right, y'u bet, 'specially on bullets an' sich things."

I was used to California customs, hence the cognomen, "Jim" was sufficiently comprehensive and perfectly satisfactory to me, and after the brief introduction that my miner friend gave me, I proceeded to investigate the case.

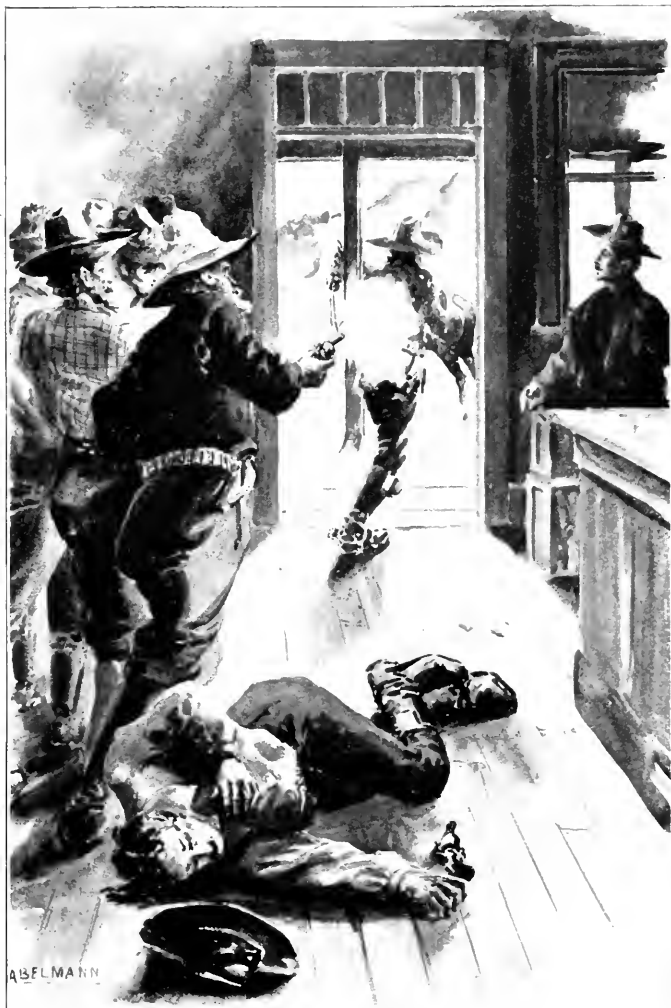
As Topsy had already informed me of the circumstances that led to the reception of my patient's wound, I made no inquiry in that direction. I found also, that Topsy was correct as to the location of the injury—as he had said, the ball had entered his friend's thigh.

The wound had been inflicted several days

before I saw my patient, and would probably have healed promptly enough if it had not been for the weary ride he had taken immediately after the shooting—he had come to Jacksonville on horse back. The result of the necessary movement in the saddle, together with the hot sun and dust of the roads, had been to produce considerable inflammation of the injured part. I presume that nowadays the surgeon would seek for no other cause than germ infection for such a condition as followed the wound which my patient had received—but at that time things were different; the various sources of irritation to which he had been exposed were a reasonable explanation of the state in which I found his wound.

The wound was merely muscular, neither important vessels nor bone having been injured, and, much to my gratification, I almost immediately succeeded in finding and extracting the ball.

Jim, as I will now call him, stood my manipulations and the cutting necessary for the extraction of the bullet without the slightest indication that such operations were not an every-day experience with him. This was not without its effect upon Toppy, who looked upon



"JIM WAS BOUNDING TOWARD THE OPEN DOOR,
LEAVING HIS INSULTER LYING UPON THE
FLOOR WITH A CLEAN CUT IN HIS CHEST"

his heroic friend with all the pride and tenderness imaginable.

When I was first introduced to the wounded man, he had merely nodded his head in greeting. He did not speak thereafter, until I had finished dressing the wound, Toppy meanwhile answering all necessary questions. It seemed to me, also, that my patient rather avoided scrutiny of his countenance. He either averted his face or shaded it with his hand, under the pretense that the flickering light of the candle which Toppy held for me affected his eyes, during the entire time of my surgical attention.

I gave this circumstance hardly a second thought; nothing seemed more natural than that my patient should desire to conceal any little involuntary expression of suffering that might have disturbed his features during my exceedingly painful manipulations. I was struck, however, by his conduct as I was preparing to leave.

"Doctor," he said, "I am very sorry that my old friend, Toppy, insisted upon calling you to-night. I could have stood the racket till morning, and your rest was much more important than my worthless existence. I appreciate your kindness, sir, and wish that I could recip-

rocate in some more fitting manner than by mere financial compensation. However that's the best I can do now;" saying which, my patient reached beneath the rude mattress upon which he was lying, drew out a bag of gold, and without further ceremony handed it to me.

"I wish it might have been more, doctor," said Jim, "but I came away from 'Frisco in a deuce of a hurry, and without heeling myself properly. However, I have divided evenly with you, and I believe such a rate of compensation is usually considered fair by professional men," and he smiled somewhat mischievously, his black eyes twinkling with humor.

My heart warmed toward my patient, I knew not why. It certainly was not because of his liberality, for that was common enough in that rude mining town, where the people were so crude as to believe that a physician's services should be liberally compensated. I kept no books in those days, my patients were so wild and uncivilized that I did not find it necessary.

"I will see you again to-morrow, sir," I said, as I nodded in recognition of the liberal fee that my interesting patient had given me, and extended my hand to bid him good-morning—for it was then long past midnight.

"Oh, no," replied Jim, hastily, "it will probably not be necessary, and my friend, Toppy, here, who is an exceptionally good nurse, can give me all the attention I require. Be assured, sir, that you shall be called in again if anything unfavorable arises. There's something healing in the California air. The bullet is out and as I can rest quietly in Toppy's cabin, there will be no further trouble, I am sure. I have been there before, Doctor," and he smiled grimly.

"Very well then," I said, "if you insist on assuming the responsibility of your own case, I suppose I have no right to protest. Remember your promise, however, and call me at the slightest intimation of trouble. I will learn how you are, from time to time, through Toppy, and if I should at any time hear an unfavorable report, I might be discourteous enough to call without an invitation."

"I think we understand each other, Doctor," replied Jim, "and now I believe I'll take a nap; sleep has been a scarce commodity with me for a few days past."

As I left the cabin I could not rid myself of the impression that there was something strangely familiar about my patient. My first acquaintance with him was certainly the night of

the affair at the Palace in San Francisco, and yet, he impressed me differently from what might have been expected in meeting an entire stranger. I had an ill defined impression that Jim had been a factor in my life before. But when, and where? My mind was a blank upon this point, nor was I likely to become enlightened, considering the lack of encouragement with which inquiries into the personal histories of the early California citizen were usually met.

When we arrived at the bank of the river on our return to the town, Toppy safely secured his little boat to the overhanging willows and insisted on escorting me back to the hotel. Although this was unnecessary, I was very glad to have the kind-hearted fellow's company, the more especially as I desired to learn something of my new and interesting patient.

Arriving at the Tuolumne House, I said—"Toppy, you have furnished me the opportunity of losing my sleep, and I propose to get even. It is almost daylight, and we may as well make a full night of it. I want to know more of your friend Jim. I don't know why, but he greatly interests me. Not but that I am always interested in my patients, but my feeling toward your friend is rather a peculiar one. Suppose we

find a quiet seat somewhere and talk a little about him?"

Toppy acquiesced, and having declined the cigar I proffered him, in favor of a stubby black pipe that he produced and lighted, we seated ourselves upon an old stump, a little way from the hotel.

"Well, Doc, I don't s'pose it's ness'ary fer me ter tell y'u that Jim's my best friend. He's the best I ever hed, since—well, since I come from the States. I've got good reasons fer likin' him, ez you'll obsarve.

"I fust met Jim at Angel's Camp, about three years ago. I was prospectin' round in Calaveras county, an' used ter make my headquarters at Angel's.

"I used ter booze a lot in them days—mor'n I do now, Doc. I guess my hide was stretchier then, an' used ter hold more. I was allus a leetle bit excitable when I was drunk, an' everlastin'ly gittin' inter trouble. That's how I fell in with Jim.

"I happened to be raisin' partickler h—l round town one night, an' drifted inter Ned Griffiths place. I'd been thar lots uv times, an' ez everybody in Angel's knowed me, an' I

was purty poplar, I'd never hed no trouble, till this night I'm tellin' y'u about.

"It jest happened that a crowd uv fellers hed come down from Murphy's camp ter have a little fun on ther own account, an' it was jes' my d—d luck ter run agin the gang 'bout the time they was beginnin' ter feel ther oats purty lively, an' of course, I hed ter git into a muss with 'em.

"Ez I didn't hev no friends in the place at the time, an' folks don't mix in other fellers' rows much in the diggin's, I was buckin' agin a dead tough game. Ez luck'd hev it, I happened ter git mixed up with the toughest cuss in the crowd—Three Fingered Jack, a feller what'll ornymment a tree yit, y'u see if he don't!*

"I got my gun out, all right, but the d—d thing was outer fix, an' if it hadn't been, I was too bilin' drunk ter hit a cow at three paces.

"Well, Jack jest played with me with his knife, kinder carvin' me up on the installment plan, ye know. He'd socked a few purty good sized holes inter my ole carkiss, an' was gittin' ready ter finish up the job in good shape, when

*And ornament the gallows tree he did, several years later.
Author.

Jim come in an' took a han' in the game with his own little bowie.

"I was too full er booze ter 'preciate the show, but they do say ez how Jim did a purty neat job. Jack got well arter a while, but he didn't act very soshoble with the folks at Angel's enny more."

"When I found out how Jim had saved my life, y'u kin bet I didn't lose no time a looking him up an' squarin' myself. I'd heard er Jim afore, an' I knowed he was a gambler by per-fession, but he played a game that night, that made a big winnin' fer yores trooly, an' I've jest bin layin' fer a chance ter do him a good turn ever since. He may be a gambler, but he plays a squar' game—an' poker at that—that's why they call him 'Poker Jim.' He's a gentleman born an' bred, that's dead sartin, an' he's got more eddication an' squar'ness than a hull lot er people whut never gambled in ther lives. When Poker Jim makes a promise, it's kept. If he shud borrer a thousan' dollars uv me—an' he could hev it too, if I hed it, you bet! an' he shud say, 'Lookee hyar, Toppy, I'll give this back to yer nex' Monday et five o'clock,' an' he wasn't on han' with the stuff, w'y, then I'd know that suthin had hap-

pened to him. Poker Jim 'll keep enny promise that he makes, if he's alive when the time fer squar'in things comes."

"You have excellent reasons for loyalty to your friend Jim," I said. "He certainly deserves your friendship and respect, no matter what his occupation may be. I have met him before, and under circumstances that proved him to be a truly noble character. But tell me, Toppo, how does it happen that you and Jim drifted apart?"

"Well, ye see, Doc, 'twas this way. The folks up at Angel's got so virtuous arter a while, that gamblers was too rich fer 'em, an' they ordered all the gams ter vamoose. Jim got ketched in the round-up 'long with the rest, an' hed ter git out 'twixt the light uv two days. He couldn't lick 'em all, less'n they'd come on one at a time, so he jest played git up an' git with t'other sports. He went to Frisco ter play higher stakes than Angel's Camp could put up, an' I came down hyar. Ye see, I wasn't none too pop'lar, on account er standin' up fer Jim, an' ez I don't gin'rally fergit ter say my say, I got inter a little argyment with one uv the prominent citizens uv Angel's one day. I was sober on that erkasyun an', well—I come

down ter Jacksonville fer my health. I writ ter Jim ez soon ez I got hyar, an' told him whar I was, an' ez soon ez he got inter trouble he knowed whar ter find a fren' whut 'll stan' by him ez long ez ther's a shot in ther locker—savvy?"

"Well," I said, "Poker Jim will soon be able to take care of himself again, and I hope he will not experience any annoyance from his recent duelling experience. He certainly is possessed of great courage, and I should dislike to see his bravery get him into further trouble."

"Y'u kin jest bet Jim's got sand! Y'u air all right on that pint, Doc. Thar ain't no braver man livin'. D'ye know whut I seed him do one night up ter Sonora? Well, thar was eight of us fellers went up thar ter a fandango, an' Jim went along ter kinder give the thing a little tone, ye know.

"Mericans aint none too pop'lar with the greasers nohow, 'cept with their women folks, an' them fellers up thar was jes' bilin', when they seed us come inter ther ole fandango. When we got ter cuttin' 'em out with their black eyed senioritas, they was ugly enough

ter slit our throats, en it was jest our blind luck that fin'ly kep' 'em from doin' it.

"Jim don't often drink enny licker, but he was a feelin' purty good that night, an' jest spilin' fer a row with the d—d greasers. Things was goin' too slow fer him, so he takes a piece er chalk, goes out inter the middle of the hall an' draws a great big 'Merican eagle on the floor. Then he pulled his gun an' called for some d—d greaser ter step on the bird! We seed he was in for it, an' gathered 'round him ready fer the music ter begin. Each side was waitin' fer t'other ter open the ball, when the feller what run the hall blowed the lights out. We grabbed Jim an' hustled him out, an' made him take leg bail 'long with the rest uv us. He wanted ter go back, but we wouldn't hev it—the game was jest a little too stiff fer us, y'u bet! Oh, yes, Poker Jim is dead game, all right.

"An' now, Doc, I'm goin' ter tell ye suthin' on the dead quiet. Jim's got a wife an' child down in Frisco. He married a little Spanish gal about two years ago, an' she was a bute, I kin tell ye! They've got a little baby a year ole, an' Jim's the proudest feller y'u ever seed. Ez soon ez that Frisco scrape is through with,

he's goin' ter send fer his family, an' I'm goin' ter quit my cabin an' let Jim an' his folks hev it. My place is kinder outer the way an' private like, an' that'll jest suit Jim."

"Well, Toppo," I said, "I am more interested in your friend than ever, and I hope that you may soon consummate your plans to domicile him and his family among us."

Day was now breaking, and the voice of the devout Dave Smuggins could be heard ringing through the halls and vibrating the very roof of the hotel, as he hoarsely shouted his pious appeal to the slumbering boarders.

Toppo accompanied me to the hotel bar and joined me in an "eye-opener," after which he bade me good morning and returned home, while I prepared to do full justice to Keyse's immortal flapjacks.

As Toppo had planned, Poker Jim subsequently became a citizen of Jacksonville. Advices from San Francisco showed the excitement caused by the duel to be practically over after a few weeks, and, his wound having healed, my patient quietly installed himself among the sporting element of our population, resuming

the occupation that had earned for him the sobriquet of "Poker Jim."

The inhabitants of Jacksonville had often heard of the cool, quiet gentleman who had called down and cut up Three Fingered Jack. Many of his fellow townsmen knew him personally. No questions were asked therefore, when Poker Jim quietly and unostentatiously identified himself with our thriving town. Nor did the citizens become more inquisitive, when, a short time afterward, Jim's family arrived and took possession of Toppy's cabin. A few curious looks were bestowed on Toppy, when it was learned that he had given up his cabin to the gambler and his family and had taken quarters at the Tuolumne House. Curiosity being at a discount in our little burg, however, and Toppy being inclined to keep his own counsel, there was no disposition to press matters to the point of disturbing his serenity.

The same conservative tendency with which the towns-people regarded the arrangement between Toppy and his friend Jim, also protected the family of the latter from intrusion. Jim never alluded to his domestic affairs, and, as Toppy did all of the necessary chores and errands for his friend's family, the personnel

of the latter was entirely a matter of speculation.

Despite the social prejudice which even a mining town entertains against the professional gambler, however leniently his occupation may be regarded, Poker Jim became very popular. His squareness and undisputed courage, associated with his quiet, unobtrusive demeanor and the never-failing accuracy with which he handled his revolver, gained for him an esteem which, if it was not respect, had about the same market value as that sentimental commodity.

Jim's field of operation was necessarily such that I did not often come in contact with him. I had endeavored to cultivate him at first, but he seemed to be decidedly averse to continuing my acquaintance and even appeared to avoid me, much to my bewilderment. I often wondered why he should have conducted himself so strangely, and also why his appearance and ways seemed so familiar. I sometimes wished I might have the opportunity of conversing with him, but he so persistently avoided me that I finally gave up all hope of ever learning more about him.

Time passed quickly in Jacksonville, and in the pressure of work that was forced upon me

by numerous cases of rheumatism and other effects of exposure during the stormy weather of the winter season, I found plenty to occupy my attention, hence I heard very little of the affairs of our people at large, for some time. I was therefore quite surprised one evening to find that my fellow-citizens were in a state of rather pronounced excitement, and, incidentally, greatly concerned about the moral status of our community.

It seemed that a wave of moral purification had been gradually passing through the mining region from one town and camp to another and the fever of moral reaction had finally struck Jacksonville.

At a more or less informal meeting held at the Tuolumne House, at which Tennessee Dick presided with more enthusiasm than knowledge of parliamentary law, it was finally decided that the gambling element of Jacksonville was a superfluous and dangerous quantity in the body social, and must therefore be removed—and that quickly. With the gambling fraternity there was included in a sweepingly condemnatory resolution, certain other unwholesome elements in our primitive social system—of the feminine persuasion.

It was noticeable that those of our citizens whose losses at the gambling table were largest and most recent, or whose morals in other directions were least worthy of commendation, were the noisiest champions of social reform. As is usually the case with meetings where the dominant impulse is to pretend a virtue though one has it not, the party of reform—and noise—carried the day.

The meeting was well timed, for the only man who might have interposed an objection to the sweeping tone of the final resolution was absent from town—Toppy had been in Stockton for several weeks. Poor fellow! He remained in blissful ignorance of the social revolution that menaced the safety of Poker Jim, until long after it was too late to defend his friend—in this world at least.

Public opinion developed into concerted popular action very quickly in California mining towns, and by the following morning, due notice had been served on every individual who was in any way identified with the undesirable element of the population, to leave town within twenty-four hours.

Most of the persons who were ordered to move on, had been in similar straits before,

and were constantly on the *qui vive* of expectation of some such emergency. As practice makes perfect, and delay is not healthful after one has been told to leave a mining town for the good of its morals, the majority of the tabooed ones took time by the forelock and decamped early. Indeed, by nightfall, everybody who had been given the ultimatum by the citizens, had departed—with one exception.

It was nearly midnight of the day of the exodus. A large party of our citizens were congregated in the bar-room of the Tuolumne House, discussing the important event that had so effectually cleared the moral atmosphere of our town. The subtle essence of sanctity apparently had already pervaded our social fabric.

Mutual congratulations had been in order for some time, and the resultant libations had considerably disturbed the equilibrium of the crowd. Each man, however, felt that he was a thoroughly good fellow, and that everybody else present was pretty good. There was not a man in the crowd who did not feel that he was a modern Hercules, jubilating after the successful accomplishment of a task beside which his

ancient prototype's experience as chambermaid in the Augean Stables, was but a trifling thing indeed. Commingled with the self-congratulations of these moral reformers, were boastful remarks expressive of the awful things the speakers would have done, had not the persons who had contaminated the very air of our little burg, opportunely left in good season after having received their "notice to quit."

The proceedings of the extempore mutual-admiration society-of-social-purists were at their height, and our citizens were fast becoming inflated to a superlative degree, when a step was heard on the hotel porch, the door opened, and there on the threshold, with a smile of mocking gravity upon his handsome face, stood—Poker Jim!

He had evidently been riding hard, for his boots and clothing were covered with the red dust of the Tuolumne roads, and his long curly hair was in a condition of dusty confusion that was totally unlike his usual immaculateness.

The sudden quiet that fell upon the noisy crowd was something phenomenal, and as a disinterested observer I was duly impressed by it. My fellow townsmen were not cowards, but they were now face to face with a quality of

bravery which was more than physical indifference to danger. Poker Jim was a man whose presence conveyed the impression of great intellectual and moral power—and it was not without pronounced effect upon those rude miners.

“Good evening, gentlemen,” said Jim, blandly, “I hope I’m not intruding on this scene of festivity and rejoicing”—and he looked about him somewhat sarcastically. “As you do not seem at all disturbed by my presence,” he continued, “I conclude that my company is at least unobjectionable, and with your permission I will join your party,” and Jim strode up to the bar, his huge spurs clinking a merry defiance as he walked.

“You see, gentlemen,” he continued, “I have a very important engagement which will temporarily necessitate my absence from town, and as I start early in the morning, I thought I would drop in and bid my fellow citizens good bye. It will save you the trouble of sending a committee to see me off—I prefer that you should not give yourselves any trouble on my account. Should you, however, appoint a committee to escort me back to town again, I shall not object. Indeed, I should feel obliged

to you if you would turn out *en masse* and greet me with a brass band. And, now, fellow townsmen, friends and former patrons, have a parting drink with me. I see your hand but cannot call you."

Whether it was because liquor was just then *en règle*, the spontaneous revival of Jim's popularity, or his cool, sarcastic assurance, is an open question, but the crowd fell to with a will, and everybody, with the exception of one man, drank with him. For the moment it seemed as though our citizens had forgotten that Jim was under the ban.

Among the party which had been celebrating the reform movement of our enterprising town, was a fellow by the name of Jeff Hosking, a comparatively recent addition to our population, who hailed from Murphy's Camp. Whether Hosking had an old time grudge to settle with Poker Jim, no one ever knew, but it was afterward rumored that a feud of long standing had existed between them.

From whatever cause, however, the gentleman from Calaveras remained conspicuously apart from his sociable companions, insolently shaking his head in refusal of Jim's proffered hospitality. To accentuate his discourtesy—

for such conduct was considered the acme of rudeness in our little community—he smiled in a manner that was an unpleasant combination of superciliousness and contempt.

The assembled company looked at Jeff in open mouthed astonishment for a few seconds, but Jim affected not to notice the implied insult, much to the bewilderment of the rest of the party.

The situation was, to say the least, embarrassing, and Dixie, with a pardonable desire to smooth things over, said—

“Well, Jeff, what’s the matter; hev y’u lost yer appetite fer licker?”

“No sirree, Mister Dixie!” replied Hosking, “but I ain’t drinkin’ with no gamblers jest now, ’specially them that ain’t on the squar’, an’ some folks that I knows of, hain’t improved much since they was chased outer Murphy’s.”

“Drink your liquor, gentlemen,” said Jim, quietly, “and then we will investigate this very interesting affair!”

The liquor having been disposed of, Jim lounged leisurely toward his insulter, looked him steadily in the eye for a moment and then said—

“And some people’s manners have not greatly



"THERE WAS A SHORT, SHARP STRUGGLE, A HARM-
LESS SHOT, AND JIM'S INSULTER WAS LYING
ON THE FLOOR WITH A CLEAN CUT IN HIS CHEST"

improved since *they* left Murphy's. As for my squareness, that's a matter for argument, but one which you are hardly competent to pass an opinion upon, unless you have changed greatly in the last few years. Now, Mr. Hosking, I'm going to tell you something that may interest you.

"At nine o'clock this morning, I was notified to change my location within twenty-four hours. I propose to get away from town as quietly and pleasantly as possible. Let me inform you, however, that until nine o'clock to-morrow morning, I am a citizen of Jacksonville, and shall stand for my rights and self-respect accordingly."

Emboldened by Jim's apparent indisposition to begin a row, and, like all bullies, mistaking conservatism for cowardice, Hosking replied:

"Y'u make a mighty purty speech, mister man, but y'u aint on the squar' jest the same, an' I—"

We never knew what Hosking was going to say; his mouth was slapped so quickly that his intentions became a matter for conjecture.

It was impossible to see exactly what happened next—the two men sprang at each other so fiercely. There was a short, sharp struggle,

a shot from Hosking's revolver, that sped harmlessly over the heads of the crowd, lodging in the wall, and Jim, bowie in hand, was bounding toward the open door, leaving his insulter lying upon the floor with a clean cut in his chest through which his life was ebbing away as fast as the escaping blood could carry it!

As Jim ran, some one in the crowd fired a shot after him. Everybody rushed to the door, but he was in the saddle and away, amid a shower of pistol balls, which, much to my relief, apparently flew wide of their mark.

I was so interested in the safety of the fugitive that I forgot poor Jeff, and, with a pang of remorse, I hastened back to his side, only to find that Poker Jim's work had been too skillful for any surgeon to undo. The man was dead!

With the killing of Hosking, well deserved though it may have been, Poker Jim's popularity was a thing of the past. While under the ban of public sentiment, he had killed a reputable citizen of Jacksonville in a quarrel—he was now an outlaw, upon whose head a price was set. But he was not to be caught.

No one supposed that Jim would be mad enough to venture near his cabin, even to see

his wife and child, yet the citizens set a watch over the place as a matter of ordinary precaution, and for the purpose of learning her destination whenever his wife should undertake to follow and join her husband. I, meanwhile, saw that Jim's family wanted for nothing, a duty in which the sentiment of the town duly supported me, for, rude as they were, our people were tender-hearted to a fault. With uncouth yet delicate discernment the boys kept away from the little cabin, hence no visitor but myself ever crossed the threshold.

Topsy's description of Jim's wife had not been overdrawn—she was indeed beautiful, and as charming a woman as I ever met. She was plucky too—she was apparently not at all uneasy about her husband, and seemed to have perfect confidence in his ability to take care of himself. The child, a boy, resembled his father, and was such a sweet, pretty little fellow that I fell quite in love with him. The little one vaguely recalled to my mind a little curly-headed boy baby that I used to tote about when I was a lad, and who, I thought, was the cutest little brother that a boy ever had. I resolved that Jim's family should not want a friend as long as I could care for them. Topsy's

loyalty I well knew, and I was therefore sure of being ably seconded on his return from Stockton.

But our towns-people were soon to have more important matters to think about than the capture of Poker Jim.

The latter part of the winter of 1860, and the early spring of 1861, will never be forgotten by the inhabitants of the Tuolumne valley. I certainly have reason to remember it as long as I may live.

As I have already intimated, the spring freshets of the California valleys were a matter of yearly experience. The inhabitants had become accustomed to them and had usually been able to escape serious disaster, hence they had never quite realized what the elements could do at their worst.

The winter had been a hard one; there had been an excessive rainfall, and reports from the mountain towns showed a greater amount of snow than had ever before been experienced in that region. When the mountain snows began to melt, therefore, and the terrific storms characteristic of the breaking up of the winter

season came on, an enormous volume of water began pouring down into the valleys, which was as alarming as it was unprecedented.

We had heard vague rumors of serious trouble in the valleys of the Sacramento and San Joaquin, and, as the Tuolumne had risen to a point hitherto unheard of, the oldest settlers became somewhat uneasy.

Fearing lest the Tuolumne—which was fast becoming a raging torrent—might eventually become impassable, I saw that “Mrs. Jim,” as I used to call her, was well supplied with necessities. I knew that the water rise would be of short duration—for so tradition had it—hence I was not uneasy about my interesting charges.

The river had finally risen to a point nearly two feet beyond the highest water mark ever known; it then began to subside and we felt much easier—the end was apparently in sight. But we deceived ourselves most thoroughly.

The people of Jacksonville, congratulating themselves on the beginning of the end of the greatest freshet in their experience, retired one night to sleep in fancied security, only to be rudely awakened the following morning by the surging of the waters of the Tuolumne

against the very beds on which they slept. The water was seeking its revenge—a revenge that was soon to be fully accomplished.

Within twenty-four hours there was but one safe point in the entire town—the high ground upon which stood the Tuolumne House. Practically every other building in town, save one, was washed away. One sturdy miner upon whom fortune had smiled, had built himself a pretty little cottage, which he determined to save. He passed a cable through a door and a window at the corner of the house, and guyed it to a huge tree upon a hill opposite. The cottage swung about at the end of the rope until the waters subsided, when the triumphant miner anchored it in a new location, this time on higher ground—the original site of his home having gently slipped into the river. But Nelson was an exception; his brother miners were not so fortunate.

The hotel was full to overflowing and tents were at a premium. Mining was a forgotten industry. The chief occupation of the citizens was counting noses to see who was missing, and fishing up such articles of value as they could from amid the debris of the flood. For entertainment they counted the buildings and

studied the wreckage that the waters brought down from the towns and camps higher up the valley. An occasional corpse was seen floating along among the flotsam and jetsam carried past by the raging river—a ghastly reminder of the seriousness of the situation.

Almost directly opposite the Tuolumne House was a dam in the river. There were times during the dry season when the Tuolumne was so low that one could walk across via this dam. Now, however, it was a veritable Niagara. It was interesting, as well as harrowing, to watch the destruction of the buildings as they toppled over the brink and broke up. Occasionally a house, larger than the rest, would lodge at the dam for some time before going over. At one point quite a mass of debris had collected and bade fair to remain indefinitely blocked up against a projecting part of the dam.

Just beyond the further end of the dam I could see Toppy's little cabin, gleaming white and clearly cut against the dark green background of the hillside whereon it stood, far out of the way of all possible danger from the rising waters.

A group of our citizens was standing on safe

ground near the hotel, quietly discussing the apparently hopeless misery and total destruction that had befallen our industrious little town, when our attention was attracted by a house, larger than any we had yet seen, which came drifting rapidly down the stream in full view.

As the house came nearer, Dixie called out—"By G—d, boys! thar's a man in the winder!"

And so there was, and a badly frightened one at that! As he came well within sight, he could be seen waving a garment of some kind in wild and emphatic signals of distress. His voice could soon be heard, calling for assistance in a series of wild yells that would have done credit to an Indian war-dance.

There was great excitement among my fellow citizens for a few moments, and groans of despair at our inability to rescue the stranger were plentiful, when suddenly some one in the crowd yelled—

"Oh, h—l! It's a d—d Chinaman, ez sure ez shootin'!"

And so it proved to be.

I trust that the philanthropy of my fellow townsmen will not be underestimated, if I frankly state that an unmistakable sigh of re-

lief went up from the crowd when it was discovered that the poor devil whose fate it had just been bewailing, was a despised Mongolian.

The nationality of the hapless passenger in the floating house and the hopelessness of an attempt at rescue, even if our citizens had been so disposed, served to silence the spectators of the Chinaman's fate. In justice to my old friends, I will state that I have never doubted that an effort to save the luckless Mongolian would have been made, had any means of rescue been at hand. Not a boat was left in town, and even had there been a hundred at our disposal, it looked like certain death to attempt to traverse the terrific torrent that confronted us.

The Chinaman was apparently clearly doomed, and the end was only a question of minutes, a fact which the poor fellow himself appreciated even more keenly than we did, as was shown by the renewed vigor of his frantic cries for assistance, as he caught sight of the dam that his strange craft was so rapidly nearing.

But, as Big Brown was wont to say, "Nobody hez sich good luck ez er fool, 'ceptin' a d—d Chinaman." The house in which the luckless voyager was making his unwilling and terrible journey, caught upon the debris

that had accumulated near the center of the dam! Here it remained poised for an instant, almost upon the very verge of destruction, then swinging squarely about in the rushing current, it lodged broad-side to, in such a manner that it came to a full stop and remained motionless.

The unfortunate Chinaman now redoubled his cries for assistance, and the crowd, in silent awe, awaited the giving way of the temporary obstruction and the inevitable destruction of the house and its unhappy tenant.

A moment later, a man was seen to emerge from the scrub pines near the water's edge upon the opposite side of the river, some distance below Toppy's cabin. He was dragging a small boat, that had evidently been concealed among the trees.

The man pushed his little craft into the swift running water, sprang in, and pulled boldly away from the bank! As he did so, he stood upright for a moment and turned his features squarely toward us. Even at that distance there was no mistaking that magnificent physique and fearless bearing!

"It's Poker Jim, by G-d!" cried a number of men simultaneously. Almost automatically,

several among the crowd drew their pistols and fired at the far-distant figure—a useless feat of bravery, as their target was probably beyond rifle-shot, to say nothing of trying to hit a man at that distance with a six-shooter.

“Hold on, boys!” cried Big Brown, in astonishment. “If he aint goin’ arter that d—d Chinaman I’ll eat my hat! Well, I’ll be ker-flummuxed! If that don’t beat h—l!”

If there was anything the early settlers of the diggings worshipped, it was reckless, fool-hardy bravery. From that moment Jim was a hero, a Bayard, *sans peur et sans reproche*, before whose chivalry every man who saw his courageous act was ready to bow down to the very earth.

The crowd silently watched Jim for a moment, and then broke out in a chorus of “bravos!” and hand clappings which, although they impressed the object of their admiration not at all—even if he noticed them, which is doubtful—expressed in unmistakable language a sudden change in the sentiment of our townspeople toward him whom they had so recently outlawed.

The first burst of applause over with, we watched the brave fellow in almost breathless

anxiety, as he skilfully directed his little boat toward the house, the Chinaman meanwhile having stopped his yelling for the moment, in anticipation of the approach of his rescuer.

Whether Jim had intended to bring up against the side of the house that lay up-stream, as seemed wisest, would be difficult to say; if such was his intention however, he certainly miscalculated, for his boat disappeared behind the end of the house which was farthest away from us.

The rest of the tragedy we could not see, for we had hardly lost sight of Jim before the obstructing debris gave way and the house shot over the dam, sweeping everything before it!

So died a hero!

A searching party went out a short time afterward, and, at great risk, found and secured the body of Poker Jim, battered and bruised, but still classically handsome and debonair, even in death. As the boys were sorrowfully returning to town with the body of the man whom a few hours before they had tried to kill, they spied upon a mass of wreckage that had lodged in a partially submerged tree-top a few feet from shore, a badly frightened but still

yelling individual, at the sight of whom Big Brown almost collapsed.

It was the Chinaman!

Early the next morning, a cortége composed of every citizen who was able to walk, climbed slowly and sorrowfully up the road leading to the little cemetery, just back of town. At the head of the solemn procession were six stout miners, hat in hand, bearing upon a rude stretcher the body of Poker Jim. Just behind the body, another party was carrying a rough coffin, composed of pieces of wreckage, hastily thrown together.

By no means the least sorrowful feature of the funeral was the fact that we had no means of communication with the dead man's wife, nor did we indeed, even know whether or not she had witnessed his death.

The cemetery reached, and the body having been laid in the clumsy coffin beside the grave which the kind-hearted miners had already dug, there was an embarrassing pause—

I had been asked to say a few words, in lieu of a clergyman, and had agreed to do so, on condition that some one else was selected to

say something in behalf of the mining population proper. Dixie was selected to coöperate with me, but was evidently waiting for me to give him his cue, so I was obliged to open the services as well as I could.

I was so overcome with emotion that I could hardly find voice to say a word. I finally managed, however, to give a brief eulogy of the dead man, revolving chiefly around the incident that happened in the San Francisco gambling-house on the occasion when I met Jim for the first time. My remarks were received with a running fire of muttered eulogies of the deceased hero, which were as sincere as they were inelegant.

Dixie now mustered up the necessary courage, mounted a stump and began:

"Feller citizens, we air hyar ter do a solemn dooty. One uv our most prom'nent an' respected citizens is a lyin' hyar dead, an' we, ez his fren's, air hyar ter give him a good send off. Poker Jim hez passed in his checks; he hez cashed in fer the las' time, an' thar aint nobody hyar whut'll say that his last deal wasn't a squar one. Sum mout say ez how Jim was a d—d fool, ter play agin sich a dead open-an'-shut game, with a d—d Chinaman fer

stakes, but, my feller citizens, Jim cut the cards on the squar', an' he died ez squar' ez enny man that ever stepped in shoe leather.

"An' Jim died game, an' with his boots on. He was n't no white-livered coyote, Jim wasn't. Ef thar was enny yaller streaks in him, w'y nobody ever knowed it. He wuz a sandy man frum way up the creek, y'u bet! He wuz a dead-game cock fer fair.

"I wish we knowed whut Jim's States' name was, but thar aint nobody hyar ter tell us, an' ez we hev allus knowed him as Poker Jim, w'y that's the name we'll bury him by. It was good 'nuff fer him, livin', an' it's good 'nuff fer us, now that he's dead.

"I aint no speechifier, ez y'u all know, an' Doc, hyar, hez done the hansum thing by Jim in that line, so I aint a goin' ter spile a good thing, but I'm jes' goin' ter say one thing, an' say it plain. We all made mistakes on the diseased. He mout hev been a gambler—I don't say ez he wasn't—but, my fren's, Poker Jim was a gentleman, an' he died like one, d—d ef he didn't!" And Dixie looked about him defiantly, as though challenging dissent and stamping it as hazardous.

A white head-board, rather more pretentious

than was the prevailing fashion in Jacksonville, was erected at Jim's grave. I was consulted regarding an epitaph, but could find no fault with the rudely carved inscription suggested by Dixie—

“HERE LIES THE BODY
OF
POKER JIM—GENTLEMAN.”

A few days later, the flood had subsided sufficiently to warrant an attempt at crossing the river. Having succeeded in procuring a large boat from one of the neighboring towns, a party of us crossed over to Toppy's cabin in quest of Jim's family.

There had been no sign of life about the place since the day of Jim's death, hence I was not surprised to find the cabin empty. Not a trace of the dead man's wife or child could be found! Nor were they ever heard of again. Whether the poor little woman had witnessed the disaster that made her a widow, and the raging Tuolumne had received the sorrowing, despairing mother and her innocent child, we never knew. I have always entertained a vague hope that Jim had already conveyed

them to a place of safety when he met his death.

As our party was searching the cabin for clues to the disappearance of Jim's family, Big Brown found upon a shelf in the little cupboard where Toppy's rather primitive supply of dishes was kept, a letter, carefully sealed, and addressed to me. He handed me the letter, and I fancied his voice trembled a little as he said—

"Well, Doc, Jim never forgot his fren's. I don't know what Toppy 'll say when he gits back ter town."

"Poor Toppy," I said, "It will grieve him sorely, when he learns that the gallant Jim is gone forever."

The burly miner watched me curiously as I opened and read the letter. The expression of my face as I read must have startled him, for he grasped me by the arm and exclaimed, "What's the matter, Doc; air y'u sick?" I handed him the letter and staggered to a chair.

Big Brown laboriously read the letter through to the end. When he came to the signature he put his huge hand gently on my shoulder and said:

"Doc, ye needn't be ashamed uv relations

like him, even if he was a gambler. Who was he, anyhow?"

And I was not ashamed as I answered—

"My brother—little Jim."

TOMMY THE OUTCAST

"Hello, Fido!"

"I beg pardon, sir; did you speak to me?"

"Why, don't you know me, Fido?"

"Great heavens! Tommy Baker, as I'm alive! Why, what on earth—?"

"I don't wonder that you are surprised, Fido, old boy—for I'm not the same Thomas Baker as of yore. Four years away from the old farm have wrought great changes in me. Four years of life in a large city, with its ups and downs, its luxuries and its hardships, are enough to demoralize anybody. And still, you look sleek and comfortable enough."

"Oh, thank you, Tommy," replied Fido, "I am doing tolerably well, that's a fact. You see, I'm living with Mrs. Geeswillem—she's the wife of old Geeswillem the brewer, you know, who bought me just after you ran away from home. I've got a mighty soft job, and don't you forget it. I have only one complaint to make, and that is that my mistress insists on making me wear this measly red blanket, and

this stiff collar with its confounded bells. Then, too, I have to ride out with her every pleasant afternoon, and she stuffs me with *bon bons* and such truck until I feel like a corner in sugar stock. Why, Tommy, old chap—do—you—know—I haven't even *smelled* a rat since I took my present place!"

"Ah, me!" said Tommy, "I haven't had many chances to smell anything else for the last two years, and the rats I *have* had, haven't been the corn-fed article we used to hunt together down at Baker's farm, I can tell you. How I miss 'em! And the cream, and buttermilk, and sausages and—"

"Great Scott! Tommy," cried Fido, "don't ever mention sausage to me again! If you only knew—!"

"Pardon me, Fido. In my glowing recollection of pleasures past, I forgot that you have been living in the city for some time and have probably long since discovered that all is not gold that glitters. There's many a tragedy imprisoned within the cover of the city sausage. And yet, Fido, such reflections should be valuable to you as inculcating a lesson of Christian humility. If this be not enough, look at me, and think how ephemeral is terrestrial glory. I

was once as thou art—fat, pampered, happy, and with never a thought of the morrow. Ah, my boy! who can control his own destiny; who can govern the mysterious workings of fate?"

"Well, Tommy," said Fido, "you evidently haven't regulated yours to any large extent. If you have, you'd better let somebody else take the job, for you don't seem to be making a brilliant success of it. But tell me, what has brought you to this? You were as sleek and dandified a fellow as ever wore whiskers when I saw you last. Don't you remember the time the boys got up that serenade for you and sang 'Oh he's a dude, a dandy dude!' until the roofs were covered with boot jacks a foot deep? Whew! but weren't you mad though?"

"Heigho!" sighed Tommy, "if anybody should serenade me in that fashion nowadays, I don't think I could accuse him of being personal—I look like 'the last run o' shad.' But you have asked me for my history since we were on the farm together. If you have patience to listen to the yarn of a miserable outcast, I'll gladly tell you my story. My appearance makes it unnecessary for me to remark that I am no longer Thomas Baker, Esquire, but Tommy the Tramp, as the haughty young Duchesse de Mal-

tesa, who lives in the next block, calls me, and you are likely to lose caste if you are seen talking with me in public. Let's make a sneak into the alley over yonder. There's a big dry-goods box over there behind that brick barn where we can talk without fear of interruption."

"Why, Tommy Baker!" said Fido indignantly, drawing himself up to his full height, his eyes flashing fire. "What do you take me for—a man? I'll have you to understand that I never went back on a friend in my life. Do you suppose I care a straw for other people's opinions? Not a bit of it! I'm all wool and a yard wide, and don't you forget it. If it wasn't necessary to wear this dandy trash in order to hold my job, I'd tear it off in a holy minute. Not another word, sir!—or I'll roll in the mud and prove to you that I am your old pard—*semper fidelis*, and all that—even if I go to the pound for it."

"Dear old Fido!" cried Tommy, his eyes filling with tears. "You are indeed worthy of your name. Greater love than this hath no dog, that he loseth his job for a friend. But, old fellow, to be candid with you, I don't feel as easy as I might. An awful accident happened this morning to some dear, sweet, tender little chickens in

that big yard on the corner, and while my lean and hungry appearance shows my innocence only too plainly, it's best not to take any chances. Besides, I couldn't talk freely in this public place."

"Well, Tommy," said Fido, "if that's the way you feel, we will do as you suggest. So far as the chickens are concerned, however, I don't think you need any X ray to prove an alibi." And Fido glanced pityingly at poor Tommy's spectre-like frame and diaphanous hide.

"A little slower, please," said Tommy, as he limped along after his friend. "You see, my left fore-foot is a bit lame—I cut it on a piece of broken glass the other night. There's a lot of miserable, depraved medical students in a boarding house over on Ashland Boulevard, who amuse themselves by throwing beer bottles at respectable people on the roofs. They never throw any full ones at a fellow though, you can just bet on that. It isn't really safe to venture out on a roof after dark in that neighborhood. Why, those cruel devils struck a lady friend of mine, Mrs. Felida Black, the other night, and almost broke her tail off!"

"Horrible!" cried Fido. "Why is it that those two-legged brutes can't be suppressed?

Well, that comes of being born without a soul. Such fellows really don't know any better. There is a so-called Humane Society here, the business of which is to look after decent four-footed people, but it doesn't do much but pay big salaries to its officers. The society winks whenever a ragamuffin throws a brickbat at a fellow, but just let some doctor operate on us under chloroform and—My God! Tommy, old fellow, what's the matter? Here, lean on my shoulder. Never mind the blanket—who cares for that?"

"It's nothing, Fido, just a little temporary faintness, that's all. You see, I—well, I'll tell you all about it by and by."

"Well, Tommy, your dry-goods box is quite cozy, after all."

"I fear it hardly comes up to your usual accommodations," replied Tommy, "but it is at least safe, and that's a very important point with me. Take a seat on that piece of carpet over yonder; it's clean and may be homelike to you. I? Oh, this straw will do for me. It's a trifle musty, but we can't be too particular in these democratic times. Are you comfortable?"

"Yes, thank you," replied Fido. "You must remember that I am a country dog in spite of my cloth."

“Very well, then,” said Tommy, “not being habituated to that nasty tobacco used by humans, we will not light a weed first. I will begin my story without any such offensive preliminary.

“As you are well aware, my dear Fido, I was a decent enough fellow in my youth, save for my somewhat foppish tendencies. Being—ahem!—a rather handsome chap, you will recollect that I was quite popular with the ladies. As is usually the case with such young fellows, I was at first pampered and then—spoiled. I remember with keen remorse that practically all my friends eventually became estranged from me through my self-conceit. You alone were loyal, and always ready to defend and advise me. As for my own family—they had long since ceased to recognize me when I left the old place.

“It was the old story—I became very unhappy, and felt that no one understood or appreciated me. I did not have sense enough to understand that it was my own failings that had caused me to lose my former popularity. I believed that the coldness of my friends was due to their jealousy and malicious envy.

“It was not long before I determined, with an

'I'll show 'em' desire for revenge, that I would leave the old farm at the first opportunity, and seek a field where my talents would be appreciated at their true value. And then came the tempter.

"One day while you were away with little Tod Baker on a fishing excursion, I received a call from Pete Tucker of Posyville—I don't think you ever met him. Pete had seen a good deal of the world, and his stories of adventure were perfectly fascinating to me. He had been to sea several times, had spent a couple of seasons doing the happy family act with a circus and, at the time of his visit to me, was living in Chicago—having come home for a few days' vacation. He said a great deal about the pleasures of city life, and informed me that he had a most delightful situation where he mingled with the best society and had very little to do to earn what he described as an enormous salary.

" 'Tommy, my boy,' he said, slapping me familiarly on the shoulder, 'you are a blamed fool to bury yourself out here in the country! Come back to the city with me, and I'll get you a nice soft berth where you can make something of yourself.' I yielded only too readily to the

tempter and long before you returned home, my dear Fido, I was on my way to Chicago.

"I had never before been in a large city, hence Chicago unfolded a new world to me—a world that seemed as fair as I have since found it to be corrupt.

"Pete had told me the truth, in some respects, regarding his situation. He was employed as chief mouser in the bar-room of a fashionable hotel, and living on the fat of the land. I was soon installed as assistant mouser, the rat department being under the management of a terrier gentleman named Foxy. And now came my initiation into the mysteries of office-holding

"It was with all the honest enthusiasm of youth that I began my duties, and without noting the methods of my superiors in office I worked hard day and night in the conscientious effort to secure the approbation of my employers. Pete and Foxy observed my industry with great curiosity at first, and then seemed to be somewhat amused by my actions. I finally discovered that they were actually laughing at me. This bewildered me, and I finally ventured to ask for an explanation.

" 'Ha! ha! ha!' laughed my colleagues. 'What

a young innocent it is, to be sure!' 'Why,' said Pete, 'you couldn't see through a millstone with a hole in it! We used to work ourselves to death just as you are doing, but we've got a little sense nowadays, eh, Foxy?'

" 'You bet your boots, pardner!' replied the terrier.

" 'Now, see here, Tommy,' continued Pete, 'I'll tell you just how the thing stands. We found out long ago that hard work didn't pay, and made up our minds to do as little work and have as good a time as we possibly could.

" 'Among the patrons of this place is a number of politicians and policemen. I tell you what, Tommy, those are the boys who are on to their jobs! Chancing to overhear some of their conversation at various times, I speedily discovered that I was making a blamed fool of myself. I then resolved to hold my job just as politicians and policemen do.

" 'Foxy and I have come to an understanding with our rodent friends, and with a little care on their part, we have managed to avoid all suspicion that we are not attending strictly to business.

" 'Once in a while I pick up a dead rat or mouse in the alley somewhere, and leave him

around where the old man is sure to notice him—see? Sometimes a strange rodent blows in here, and forgets to bring his pull with him, and we nail *him* to the earth in great shape. I tell you what, Tommy, work was never made for gentlemen—and Foxy and I are gents from way back. We've got a soft thing here, and you're in on it. Plenty to eat, drink enough to float a ship, and a soft warm bed. What more could anybody ask?"

"Alas! Fido, old friend, how alluring to unwary youth is gilded temptation! I followed the dishonest advice of my companions and fell into their evil ways, and like most young persons of little experience, I was soon anxious to outdo my models in the extent and variety of my dissipation. I ate, drank and made merry with all the abandon of an old timer.

"The example of my associates, bad as it was, could not be compared with that set for me by some of the two-legged patrons of the place. Pete may have been right about their social position, but of all the vulgar, profane, beastly fellows I ever saw, the young bloods who frequented that bar were the worst. But my prejudices were soon overcome, and I came to believe that such qualities were absolutely essential to fellow-

ship in the smart set of a great city. And so I continued in my evil ways, my life being one continual round of hilarious and intemperate pleasure.

“The outcome was precisely what was to have been expected. I fell seriously ill, and had it not been for a splendid constitution derived from my early life in the country, I most certainly would have died. I finally became convalescent and was speculating on how soon I would likely be able to get to business again, when an unlooked for complication set in. I caught the mange, and in a few weeks was a perfect fright. My hide looked as if it had been plucked out in spots. It was not long before some of the patrons of the place noticed my condition and commented sarcastically upon it to my employer. One man said I ought to go to the Springs and boil out, whatever that may mean.

“I received but little consolation from Pete and Foxy; indeed, they were quite shy of me after my skin trouble developed, and, as you might suppose, my life was most miserable.

“But my troubles had only begun. A short time after this I overheard my employer conversing with a rough-looking man, who used to hang about the place doing odd jobs for drinks.

To my consternation, the boss was making arrangements with that infamous rowdy to take my life that very night! I listened to the foul plot with my heart in my mouth. I nearly fainted, so great was my horror and agitation. What to do I hardly knew at first. I no longer had confidence in Pete and Foxy, and would not ask their advice. I finally determined to try to make my escape before the fatal moment should arrive.

“Evening came, and with it my opportunity to escape. Just at dusk, before the gas was lighted, I sneaked out of the alley door between the heels of a customer, and arriving in the open air, ran as fast as my trembling legs could carry me until I reached a part of the city far distant from the hotel where my would-be assassins were probably even then searching for their intended victim.

“For some weeks after my escape, I led a paw-to-mouth existence. Half-starved, despondent, set upon by strange dogs, stoned by cruel vicious boys—I often regretted that I had not permitted my life to be taken by that ruffian at the hotel. He would have drowned me, most likely, and death by drowning would have been far pleasanter than the life I sub-

sequently led. You may wonder why I did not commit suicide, but frankly, I hadn't courage enough for that. Some folks say that only cowards commit suicide, but don't you ever believe it.

"The horror of my transition from the easy life at the hotel to that of a homeless, despised wanderer, was something of which you can have no conception, my dear Fido, and I sincerely hope you may never pass through so terrible an experience as I had at that time and have been having since I—but I am getting ahead of my story.

"I don't know how I lived through the terrible ordeal of starvation and abuse to which I was subjected. I was inexperienced and very sensitive to hardships. Nothing could disturb me now, but then—ah me! How tender is youth!

"After some weeks of terrible privation and physical torture, I began to believe that the fates were against me, when the tide of my affairs unexpectedly turned.

"I had crawled into an open basement window in the rear of a modest and unpretentious-looking house over on Adams Street one stormy night, hoping to find something to satisfy my

terrible hunger. To my despair, everything was under lock and key. Noticing a number of rat holes about, I determined to make an attempt to capture a rodent or two for my supper, and posted myself at the hole that looked most promising.

"Game was scarce; in my then weakened state my vigil was too fatiguing and I fell asleep at my post. When I finally awoke I was horrified to find myself in the hands of a woman!

"You better believe I was frightened! Why, my dear Fido, I never had such a scare in my life. But fortunately I had no cause for alarm; my captor—who proved to be the cook—was most kind to me. She took me up stairs to the kitchen and gave me a good, substantial meal and a warm, soft bed. For the first time in many weeks I passed a comfortable night, free from the pangs of hunger and unrest.

"When morning came, I of course supposed I would be told to go. To my delight I was not only given a sumptuous breakfast, but nothing was said about my departure, and I began to hope that I might be able to secure a permanent position with the family.

"After I had finished my breakfast, the cook disappeared for a few moments. She soon returned accompanied by two children, whom she called Johnny and Ethel. They spoke to me kindly, and Ethel said:

" 'Oh, Johnny, let's ask mamma if we can't keep the poor thing!'

" 'Let's do,' cried Johnny, delightedly, 'and I'll ask papa to give us some liniment for him, too, he looks just like he was havin' the measles.'

" 'Pshaw! me darlints,' said the cook, 'd'ye shpose yer pa 'll be afther docthorin' cats?'

" 'Of course he will,' replied Ethel, 'didn't he fix Willie Thompson's dog when he broke his leg?'

" 'Sure enough, my dear Fido, the children's papa was a doctor, and he soon cured my skin trouble. After I was myself again, there was no longer any danger of being asked to leave, for the children became very fond of me; even the baby seemed to take a great fancy to me.

" 'I got along famously with the children, although they were a little rough at times. Johnny was somewhat inclined to be gay once in a while, but I came out all right. I remember one close call I had, though. Ethel wanted to play I was sick one day, and that

Johnny was a doctor. They gave me some of the worst stuff a fellow ever tasted—just held me and poured it down my neck! Then Master Johnny suddenly discovered that I had ‘tonsillitis,’ whatever that is. He’d heard his papa use the word, I s’pose. I must be ‘operated,’ the little rascal said, and going into the doctor’s surgery he got a vicious looking instrument. Ethel held me, and the amateur doctor proceeded to plunge his devilish contrivance down my throat! After fishing up a few chunks of spleen, and liver, and things, Johnny let me go, saying, ‘Madam, your child will get well now.’ I did get well, but my internal revenue and things have never since felt just right.

“But Johnny was my friend just the same. Gosh!—how he did lick a rude, vulgar boy who threw stones at me one day! ’Twould have done your heart good to see him.

“Ethel and I used to have some awfully nice times together. She used to dress me up in doll’s clothes and play I was a baby. And then she would put me in a little cradle and rock me to sleep. The dear child used to be so pleased because I lay so still, and she used to say I was ‘a dear, good, sweet little kitty.’

To tell the truth, though, I just had to lie still, for those long clothes used to trip me up every time I tried to walk. I did try to sneak away one time, and fell down stairs and almost broke my neck.

“But the baby was my special delight. He was a fat, roly-poly, sweet faced youngster as ever you saw. His skin was like a pink rose-leaf, and his mouth was as fresh—well, as fresh as new milk. Whenever the folks weren’t looking, I used to climb into the crib and little Harry and I would have a high old time, I tell you. He would maul me about for a little while and then hug and kiss me just awful nice. And then when we’d got all tired out he would snuggle up close to me and go to sleep—and I would lie there quite still and watch him while he slept.

“The folks would catch me in the crib sometimes, and whew! but then there was a row, and no mistake! They used to just paralyze me—said I’d suck the baby’s breath, you know. The stupids! Why should I do that? I like babies, but lurching on babyfied air wouldn’t do me in those days, though it might be substantial enough now. Human folks have some queer notions, eh, Fido?”

“Oh, well, you know, Tommy,” said Fido,

"that out-of-date 'sucking the breath' business is an old woman's notion, but humans don't seem to have much judgment. They still believe in miracles and all that, and the breath-sucking theory shouldn't surprise you."

"Speaking of the peculiarities of humanity, Fido," said Tommy, "isn't it queer that humans don't like music?"

"Yes, I have often noted the fact, on occasions when I have sung to the moon," replied Fido.

"Well," said Tommy, "the folks at the doctor's house used to play on an old rattle-box of a piano till they fairly made me sick, but just let me sing ever so little and there was trouble at once. You will recall that in the old days I used to be quite proud of my voice. I supposed that I had some vocal talent left and I have done a little singing since I came to the city. I fear however, that my voice is not appreciated here. My city neighbors were the worst kind of kickers, and caused me no end of trouble. You see, there was a young lady cat who lived near us and—By the way, I didn't tell you about how I first fell in love, did I? Well, it was just—the—richest—thing!"—

"No doubt, no doubt," exclaimed Fido, hast-

ily interrupting, "but just hear that bell. It's nine o'clock and—"

"Oh, well, I was digressing anyway," said Tommy.

"As I was saying, there was a young lady cat living near us with whom I will confess I was somewhat smitten. I used to call on her evenings. I was too busy to call day-times, and besides, a tin roof is just awful on a fellow's feet when the sun's out. I often used to serenade her, accompanying my singing with the violin. She was very fond of stringed instruments, and especially the violin. She used to say there was no musical instrument that was so cat-like and natural in its tone and feeling. The dear girl—what exquisite musical taste she had! Ah! how I loved her! Why, I felt, when in her presence, as though I were full of vibrating E strings—*au naturel*, but none the less vibrating. And I mind me well that she was not unresponsive. Shall I ever forget that mellow September night when she first confessed she loved me? 'Ah! Thomaso,' she cried—(Thomaso, by the way, was a feminine conceit of hers; she had been abroad, you know)—'Ah! Thomaso, how bleak and drear were the most pretentious roof without thee! Where is there such another form, or

voice so sweet as thine? The girl who did not love thee would be lost to all appreciation of the feline form divine. I love thee, Thomaso, oh, how I love thee!

"Of course, I blushed, my dear Fido—I knew only too well how undeserving I was.

"But, to quote an old chestnut, the course of true love was by no means smooth with me. It chanced that the attic room of the house next to the one in which my charmer lived, was occupied by a young man named Jenkins. Now that fellow Jenkins had the fool notion that he was musical. That wouldn't have been so bad, though his singing was vile, but he wanted to monopolize the singing business altogether. You never saw such an envious brute! Just as soon as I began my lovely serenades, that despicable counter-jumper would begin throwing old boots and chunks of coal at me. But I kept my temper and said nothing, though I was mad enough to claw the face off him.

"Not content with his vicious assaults, the murderous brute finally attempted to assassinate me, and very nearly succeeded. I had composed a madrigal for my sweetheart, and had just finished singing it to her one evening when that calico-vending dude fired at me with a pistol

and narrowly missed cutting me off in the flower of my youth. The ball lodged in my shoulder, and gave me no end of trouble. Did you ever hear of such a cold-blooded attempt to—”

“Pardon me, Tommy,” said Fido, “but what was the song like?”

“Let me see;” said Tommy, “perhaps I can remember it. Oh yes, it ran like this:

*“‘When the silvery moon doth brightly beam,
after the toil of day is done, how fair my darling
dost thou seem, as thou climb’st the fence, or on
the ridge-pole swiftly run. Thy form is sylph-
like in its grace; thy voice seraphic sweet and low;
how soft the whiskers on thy face, that in the
moonbeams brightly glow.*

“‘Miow, miow, miow, miow, ’iow, ’iow, ’iow!’”

“Um-ah,—” said Fido. “Your song has one very admirable feature—it has but one verse. I am not sure, however, but that I shall have to acquit the young man who shot you. Self defense, you know, my dear Tommy is—”

“Oh, stow your sarcasm, Fido!” cried Tommy. “It isn’t at all becoming to you, my boy. If you don’t want to hear the rest of my story, just say so.”

“Oh, well, Tommy, you mustn’t be so sen-

sitive to the raillery of an old friend. Go on with your yarn. It is highly interesting."

"Well, as I was saying, the ball lodged in my shoulder and nearly killed me. I was sick a long time, and the doctor finally took me to a veterinary for consultation. Of course I couldn't say anything about the bullet—on the lady's account you know—so the doctor was stumped for once. The veterinary pounded me black and blue from head to foot, and after gouging my belly full of finger holes, said — 'He's got appendicitis, and we will have to operate.' That settled *me*—I just jumped through the window, sash and all, and weak as I was, succeeded in escaping. A man who doesn't know lead poisoning from appendicitis, can't monkey with Tommy Baker's domestic economy, you can just bet your life on that!

"Through the kindly offices of one of my friends I succeeded in getting accommodations in a stable near by, where I lived on mice and wind for three weeks, at the end of which time my wound was entirely well. I had more wind than mice on my stomach most of the time, but the dieting evidently did me good. I finally went home, and you never saw such

rejoicing as there was among the children. They hugged me 'most to death.

"The doctor was always kind to me, but at times his attentions were quite marked. He often kept me in a little room by myself for days and days at a time. He fed me with his own hand, and was very careful of my health. He took my temperature and pulse, and looked at my tongue twice a day. Sometimes he put a little needle in my back and seemed to be squirting something under the skin. It didn't hurt much, but I felt mighty funny a little while afterward. Queer, wasn't it?"

Fido, who had had diphtheria once and was up on toxins, smiled rather pityingly and said, dryly, "Rather."

"I never doubted the doctor's honesty of purpose but once. There was a little room just off the library that he called the laboratory. He used to shut himself up in that little closet—that's about all it was—for hours at a time. Now it wasn't any of my business, but I couldn't help being curious to know what he was doing in that little den. Then, too, I was certain that I smelled nice fresh meat just as he came out one day. Of course that

completely demoralized me and I determined to look into the matter. Ah me! why did I not remember that old story about Bluebeard?

"Well, I watched my chance, and one night when the doctor had his back turned I sneaked into the laboratory, the door of which was slightly ajar. Noticing that he had left the door open, the doctor came back and closed and locked it, leaving me a prisoner. I was not frightened, however, for I was sure the doctor would soon be at work in the laboratory again and give me an opportunity to escape. I chuckled to myself, wretch that I was, to think that my curiosity was at last to be gratified.

"Jumping upon the table that the doctor used as a work bench, I saw a sight that froze the very whiskers on my cheeks! There, spread out upon the table lay the ghastly, mangled, lifeless body of a cat whom I recognized as one of my best friends! I fell in a dead faint."

"Sort of a cataleptic fit—eh, Tommy?" said Fido, with a sly, humorous twinkle in his eye. Tommy disdained to answer, and continued:

"How long I lay in my swoon I do not know.

When I awoke, the doctor was standing over me and saying—

“‘I wonder how the devil that blamed cat got in here! He seems to be sick.’

“Sick? Ye Gods! I should think I was sick!

“I never became quite reconciled to the doctor after that, and when, some time afterward, he forbade the children to kiss and hug me any more just because I ate some pickled stuff that stood on a shelf in his office, I actually grew to dislike him.

“But everybody else loved the doctor, and I have sometimes thought that perhaps I didn’t quite understand him. He was certainly good and kind to everybody about him.

“Taken all in all, my life was a very happy one, and I not only had a pleasant home, but after a time I got a real jolly old chum, by the name of Towser. When Johnny first brought Towser home he ‘sicked’ him on me, ‘just for fun,’ he said, and the old dog and I had a terrible scrap. But I swiped him a good one under the eye, I tell you, and he treated me fine after that.”

“Scrap? Swiped him? Why, what on earth do you mean, Tommy?” asked Fido.

"Oh! I forgot that you were an aristocrat, my dear Fido. I meant that I had a fight with Towser and struck him under the eye. See?"

"Ah! now I comprehend," replied Fido.

"Well, as I was saying," continued Tommy, "I enjoyed life immensely. Towser was a fine old fellow, and he and I used to romp and play with the children most of the time."

"Your life must indeed have been very happy, and I wonder that you could ever have left so pleasant a home, friend Tommy," said Fido.

"Ah! my dear old friend, there was never dream of bliss so fair that no cloud e'er came to mar the beauty of its skies. Trouble came to that happy household, and within a few weeks all was sadly changed, and I was again a waif of the streets.

"The baby had been ailing for some time, and we could see that the doctor was very uneasy about him. The poor little fellow finally developed some brain trouble or other—I can't remember the Latin name of it, but I believe it was what old Dr. Cochran over at 'The Corners,' used to call 'Water on the brain,' or 'Meningeet-us,' or something like that.

"Well, the poor little fellow didn't stand his sickness very long. It was just awful to see him

wasting away, getting weaker and weaker every day. He used to notice me quite a little at first, but after a while he didn't seem to know me any more. I had suspected this for a day or two, but it seemed too horrible for belief. It was soon plain, however, that dear little Harry no longer recognized those who loved him, and for the first time it dawned upon me that my darling playmate was soon to be called away forever. Baby dropped off to sleep one night, and the doctor said that he thought the little one was better. He deceived everybody but me—I had seen babies go to sleep that way before, lots o' times.

“As I feared, Harry never awoke again in this world. I heard Ethel say the angels had taken him away to Heaven—a grand, beautiful place that human folks say is up yonder some where beyond the clouds. If that was true, the angels were mighty mean—for we were all broken-hearted.

“If Ethel was right about Harry going to Heaven, I hope there's room for dogs and cats up there. Poor old Towser fell sick and died soon after the baby went, and I would feel better about the little one's death if I knew that Towser was with him. The faithful old dog used to

take such good care of the dear little pet. Then, too, I might see them again some day, and we could live the old happy days over again. Don't mind my emotion, Fido, I loved Harry very dearly. Bless my whiskers, old chap, if you are not crying too!

"After they had put our sweet little blossom into a cruel white, frosted looking box and taken him away, the house seemed as gloomy as an old cellar. Nobody ever seemed to be happy again. Ethel and Johnny mourned after little Harry all the time, and many a time I caught the doctor crying softly to himself when he thought no one was looking. He didn't think I understood, poor fellow.

"The doctor appeared to be more like his old self again, after a time, but he seemed to work harder than ever before. He sat up very late o' nights reading and writing—that is, when he had no patients to attend to. My! how he used to slave over those people! And half of 'em never paid their bills, either. The doctor didn't mind the poor ones, but he used to say that 'God's patients' never gave him half so much trouble as 'the devil's patients.' Sometimes I half suspected that the doctor was working hard just to

get little Harry off his mind, but perhaps I was not a good judge of such things.

“Well, a man is not a horse; he can’t carry a big load very long without breaking down, and the doctor soon showed signs of exhaustion. It grieved me to see him going to pieces, but I was helpless. I felt that it would be a very delicate matter to even attempt to advise him. And so I was obliged to watch my unfortunate master dying by inches before my very eyes.

“The end was not long delayed. The doctor finally contracted an attack of that new-fangled disease—let me see, what do they call it? Oh yes, ‘La Grippe.’ Instead of going to bed, as he should have done, he slopped about in all sorts of weather until he got pneumonia. It was all up with my poor master then—he died within a week.

“I had always supposed that doctors were all rich men, until I lived with one. My master left a lot of bad accounts and a little life insurance; that was all. Why, his wife even had to sell his books and instruments to defray his funeral expenses.

“After the doctor died, everything was changed. The end of my happy home-life was not far distant. The children were sent away to board-

ing school after a while, and their mamma soon went to live at a fashionable hotel. The home was completely broken up. I can't tell you how bad I felt when I saw all the furniture and things that the doctor used to prize so highly hauled away to be sold.

"Heigho! 'How soon we are forgot,' as old Rip Van Winkle so truly said. Well, I soon found myself homeless and a vagabond once more. I have since had all sorts of luck—mostly bad, however. I have tried my hand at almost everything, but have never been able to secure another comfortable position. I was a lawyer's cat for a while, but my family pride came to my rescue after a time, and I quit the job. There is blue blood in my veins, Fido, and though I may be down on my luck, I have not quite lost my self-respect."

"Ah! you are boasting of blue blood nowadays, are you, Tommy? How does that happen?" asked Fido.

"Why, don't you know about the cats that were found in the pyramids along with Rameses and his folks?" asked Tommy. "You ought to read up, my dear Fido."

"Have you ever heard from the doctor's folks since their home was broken up?" asked Fido.

“Oh, yes; I have kept track of them right along. The doctor’s wife finally married again and the children came home to live with her soon afterward. I called at their house one night, and was unceremoniously kicked out. Johnny and Ethel were grown-up folks and had no use for cats any more, besides, they didn’t know me from Adam. I was just a tramp cat, that was all, and was treated like any other vagrant.

“But I have got used to hard lines, and so long as I can capture an occasional rat, I suppose I will be able to live. Once in a while a nice pet canary or toothsome young chicken comes my way; then there is great joy in the department of the interior.

“My health is none of the best, at times, and I don’t believe I shall live many years, but the sooner to sleep the sooner to rest, and I know that brave old Towser and dear little Harry are waiting for me up yonder. Towser is still a loyal old dog, and Harry is not grown-up folks, like Johnny and Ethel, but a sweet, winsome little baby boy as of old.

“Well, Fido, old comrade, I have told you my story, and it is now nearly midnight, so we must say good night. There is nobody to com-

plain when *I* keep late hours, but it's different with you. Good jobs are scarce, and I don't want you to risk losing yours. I will see you next Tuesday evening if you like.

"Hello! it's raining. There's a cold wind blowing too. Awful weather for the rheumatism and mange, isn't it? You'll get that pretty blanket wet, Fido, my boy."

"Oh, drat the blanket!" said Fido, "I'll hurry along though. Good night, Tommy."

"Good night, Fido, good night."

JOHNNY

A STORY OF THE PHILIPPINES

Johnny was a typic gamin from the Chicago slums. He never denied it, and it would have been useless if he had; the ear marks were too plain. What had impelled him to enter the volunteer service was a mystery. Some of the men in the —th Illinois had been heard to say at the company mess, that a difference of opinion upon matters ethical between Johnny and the police was the main-spring that had worked the little tough army-ward. Pertinent inquiries directed at the boy himself had ceased abruptly when big Tom O'Brien, the battalion sergeant major, got through swearing, and rubbing the bump on his head with which Johnny, through the medium of an accurately aimed canteen, had decorated him. Tom wound up with, "Byes, the little divil is too small to lick, an' too big to monkey wid, so I'll sarve yez notice that Mr. T. O'Brien, Esq. will attind to his own business hereafter. An' be Jasus," he added significantly, "the rist av ye'll do the same, for be the same

token, I notice yez all be bigger than Johnny." It was obvious that the boy did not need a protector, but nevertheless, the warm-hearted Irishman's attitude toward him was a peace promoter in no mean degree.

No one had ever accused Johnny of patriotism. He knew all about the blowing up of the Maine and thought it was a shabby piece of business, the perpetrators of which should be punished. "But," he added sagely, "they ain't hangin' none o' them strikin' railroad guys, fer wreckin' trains and slugin' scabs, an' I guess there ain't much difference. There's a lot o' dead an' smashed up folks, any way you fix it."

It was evidently a hopeless task to try and elucidate for Johnny patriotic reasons for the war with Spain. His philosophy was too strong to cope with.

When Johnny first joined the regiment he was not a creditable specimen from a physical standpoint. A subtle sympathy with the under dog in the breast of the regimental surgeon, Major Brice, was mainly responsible for the mustering in of the unpromising recruit. Slouchy in gait, under-sized, weazened, lanky and round shouldered, with the air of one pursued, the boy was as unsoldier-like as could possibly be im-

agined. He said he was nineteen, but it did not require a professional eye to detect the fraud—a fraud of several years—without much doubt.

The captain of K Company was very particular about the physique of his men, and the surgeon and he had a confidential arrangement which had kept out of the service many a man who might have passed a fair examination before the army board. When Captain Harkins saw Johnny in the ranks of the “rookies,” he gave a gasp of horror and ran post haste to the surgeon’s quarters. He entered the tent rather unceremoniously, somewhat ruffling the self-composure of its occupant, who was rather austere and dignified at times.

“Ah, Captain,” said the surgeon, “what’s the trouble, somebody hurt?”

“Hurt!” exclaimed the captain, “Hurt! Great Scott! I’m paralyzed. How in Heaven’s name did you ever pass that little degenerate shrimp of a gutter snipe that came in with that last batch of rookies? Is this a practical joke?”

“I never make practical jokes,” replied the surgeon, serenely. “I had a little whim of my own to gratify. Didn’t know I was whimsical, did you? Well, I am, and that boy is my latest whim. I fancied the service would be better for

him than the jail. I had him assigned to your company—well, because you and I understand each other pretty well, and because I want him myself. Just reassign him to me for special duty, and I'll do the rest."

The captain roared. "Well," he said, when he had caught his breath, "you have perpetrated a practical joke all the same, and landed good and proper. You had me well nigh scared into a fit."

Johnny, inscribed in regulation form as John Blank, on the muster roll of K. Company, was formally assigned to duty in the hospital department, and the following morning found him standing at the door of the surgeon's tent, a full-fledged orderly, with a rudely extemporized cross of red flannel upon the arm of his "big brother" blouse. There was a little quiet snickering at the surgeon's expense, but this soon died out, for the man of saws and pills was sensitive, somewhat muscular and, above all, wore the maple leaf on his shoulder straps.

The colonel was very indulgent with the surgeon; he knew his failings, and when his eyes fell upon the new orderly, he smilingly remarked to the adjutant, "I hope the major will be able to raise that slummy looking chap to be a sol-

dier, but I'm afraid he has a big contract on his hands."

But the surgeon was a practical humanitarian who believed in a physical basis of things moral. He had a hobby, as the new recruit soon discovered. Johnny was daily put through a course of physical "stunts" that made his life something more than a glad, sweet song. He was a little rebellious at first, and his instructor had hard work to keep him from deserting. Through the connivance of the colonel, however, who had the boy brought before him after some very flagrant act of insubordination and depicted to him in vivid colors a vision of an early morning firing squad, Johnny was brought back into line again and went on with his stunts. He was just a little suspicious of the "Old Man's" seriousness, but after the major had informed him that the colonel was a man of great earnestness of purpose and absolutely devoid of regard for human life—blood-thirsty, in fact—he became in a measure reconciled to what at first seemed to him a hard lot.

But as Johnny's training proceeded, he was conscious of a new and unwonted interest in life. He began to have a sense of physical

strength, and felt an increase of energy that made his course of physical training pleasurable. His shoulders were beginning to set up and back. It was no longer necessary to either drive or coax him to his task of self-development. The surgeon was meanwhile devoting such time as he could steal from his daily routine of antidoting the endeavors of the government to prepare our soldiers for Cuba by killing them in Tampa, to stimulation of the mental side of the neglected boy of the streets. Johnny had innate capacity enough but, as the major said, he had never in his whole life had any healthy blood to feed his brain, hence the development of the latter was not possible until now.

The men of the regiment scarcely appreciated the gradual change in Johnny. He unfolded just as a plant unfolds. Growth was there, steadily going on. The major knew, and the colonel remarked upon it, but the rest did not comprehend until one day the street boy stripped to the buff and, urged on by the mock encouragement of some of the privates, entered an improvised ring for a "friendly" contest with an ex-professional, who had entered the service chiefly in search of novelty

in the way of recreation. When the affair was over with, and the amateur referee had finished the rather prolonged count over Johnny's opponent, Tom O'Brien said delightedly; "Begorra, the byes didn't get a run fer their money. Yez kin all poke fun at Johnny now, an' ask him all the sassy quistions ye loike, an' divil a wurrud 'll I say to yez, unless yez go in more than wan at a toime."

It was evident that Johnny had become soldierly timber, and it was not long before the captains vied with each other in coaxing him to apply for a transfer to their companies. Captain Harkins alone refrained from urging the boy to return to the ranks. He might simply have assigned him back to company duty, but as he remarked to the colonel, he felt that "Johnny belonged to the man who had made a soldier out of him."

The major was not ignorant of the change in sentiment regarding his protégé. Desiring to be fair with him he said, "Johnny, some of the officers are beginning to think a little better of you than they used to. Captain Harkins is entitled to you, but seems to think you ought to have a chance to use your own discretion in the matter of going

back to the ranks. Taking care of my horse and tent, and rolling bandages for me is possibly not so much to your liking as being a real, fighting soldier. We shall probably go to the front soon. The war isn't over yet, and they can't keep us in Florida forever, so we are likely to see some pretty hot times in Cuba. If you want to go back to the company just say the word, and back you shall go."

Johnny stood at the door of the major's tent for a moment looking at the gorgeous southern sky. When he turned toward his patron his eyes were wet.

"Did you think I'd do that, sir?"

And the major replied, "No, Johnny, I didn't think you would."

But the war did end very soon, and the pride of the Brigade, the —th Illinois,—athletes, every mother's son of them,—did not get out of Florida and into Cuba until there was nothing remaining to be done save policing that fair and unfortunate island. As soon as orders came to leave for Cuba, Major Brice tendered his resignation, intending to return to civil life and resume his practice. Johnny was disconsolate. Police duty in Cuba

was not an inviting prospect—he recalled that he never did like the policeman or his works, on principle. Chicago had no attraction for him. He had been born in the army. His previous existence, he said, “didn’t count.” He had begun life in the major’s tent, and when that tent came down there would be no longer home life for him. The major was deeply touched by his protégé’s devotion, and, quite alive to the fact that Johnny would be a pretty helpless member of any society but the army, interested the brigade commander, who had been assigned for duty in the Philippines, in his case.

Through the combined influence of the general and the major, the boy received his discharge, and was immediately reenlisted in the —th Montana, then preparing to start for Manila. The bluff old general said: “Everything’s over in Cuba, but I suspect that nothing’s begun in the Philippines. In my opinion, h—I’s brewing in Manila, and unless my experience in fighting Indians is worthless, I feel pretty safe in saying that those d—d brown-skinned fellows out yonder are going to give your Uncle Samuel a devil of a lot of trouble before we get through with ’em. Dewey didn’t

do a thing to us, not to the Spaniards, when he took Manila. That Montana regiment is as liable to get into a mix up as any of 'em—they're scrappers all right—and it's just as well for that orderly of yours to get in on the ground floor. But, Major, will he fight?"

The major's eyes twinkled as he replied, "Don't worry yourself about Johnny, my dear General. He'll give a good account of himself. He is a good soldier by profession, even though I could never cure him of profanity nor teach him what patriotism means. He regards fighting as a vocation, but believes in attending to it for all he is worth."

As the general had said, trouble had not yet begun in the Philippines. It came soon enough, and Johnny got in on the ground floor with a vengeance. When the fighting finally began he was, to use his own vernacular, "on the spot," which fact, as he jestingly remarked, gave him for the first time the privilege of enjoying "the luxury of more name than 'Johnny'." His comrades exclaimed, apropos of his new cognomen, "Holy smoke! how it fits."

The —th Montana had its troubles out there in those tropic isles. Few realize what it means to plunge a raw volunteer regiment from a tem-

perate climate into tropic wilds infested with a foe that recognizes no rule in warfare save implacable, relentless murder of the enemy, by hook or by crook, by fair means or foul. A foe that fights manfully and fairly, whether at long range or close quarters, is bad enough for "raw ones" to face, even though they be the best in the world—the which is stenographic for American boys.

Bullets and bayonets are integral parts of the soldier's life. Familiarity breeds contempt for these—they are his own tools, the tools with which he blazes his own road to glory or to a hero's death. But those terrible bolos, and the Moro swords—those cruel knives that shear a man from crown to waist, or lop off heads or limbs as though they were chalk, wielded by little brown fiends who care naught for rules of fence and are willing to mix it when you compel them to close with you, just as a rat will set his fangs in your flesh when you corner him—they are different, quite. And when your soldier boy thinks of the newspapers that are preaching the milk of human kindness at home and watching like so many harpies for the slightest mishap from which political capital may be made, whilst he is wallowing

in the blood of comrades upon whom nameless mutilations have been inflicted, he has hard work to keep his courage up to the fighting pitch.

Then the dread plasmodium-bearing mosquito of the swamps, with its trail of death dealing chill and hemorrhage, the hellish amoeba of the foul tropic streams, that are so often the soldier's only source of water supply, and that awful typhoid, hovering like a somber-hued, gigantic bat over an army camp—selecting as its victims the very flower of the soldiery—these be things, not of glory, but of death, with no sublimity save that of noble self-sacrifice. And that dreadful nostalgia, that sickening yearning for home, which so often kills, or, aided by the pitiless torrid sun, beating down upon devoted heads unused to a foretaste of hell, sends men with brains awry back to Frisco by the ship load. Were not these terrors an awful crucible in which to try the metal of men whom their friends, at home, who do not know gold when they see it, are wont to call "tin soldiers?"

What a lot of maudlin sentiment the home papers and builders of political issues lavished upon those Filipino fiends who, it was alleged, were given more water than was good for them!

The soldier at the front knew the mockery of it all. He had felt the bolo of the treacherous "amigo" at his back, the while he parleyed, friendly-wise, with the aforesaid amigo's snaky comrade in front. He had seen the pitiful remnant of what were once white human forms, the forms of his own comrades and friends, still living, perhaps, fresh from the torturings inflicted by their savage captors. He had seen the dismembered bodies of children and old men who had been slain in cold blood because they or their friends had been friendly to the Americans, and he had heard the wailing of women who had suffered shameful outrage, aye, a living death, at the hands of our "little brown brother." What wonder that the boy in khaki grew tired of making prisoners of fiends from hell, who deserved nothing better than a short shrift and a merry trip back to their father, the devil, and drove his bayonet a little deeper or emptied his magazine a bit faster than would permit him to see or heed a signal of surrender?

Of all the regiments who were sent to those far away islands, none bore itself more gallantly, none was more pertinaciously put to the fore than the —th Montana. A history of the thin,

khaki-clad firing line in the Philippines that did not give more than a modest share of honor to that gallant regiment would be but a false and biased chronicle.

Johnny, the boy of the slums, may not have been so patriotically inspired as some of his comrades, but he was a fighter by instinct, and a soldier by profession. He knew his duty, fear was a thing apart from him, and he attended strictly to "business" as he understood it, namely, to obeying orders, shooting true, and keeping tab of the Filipinos he potted. There be those who say that his game bags were not only large, but of select contents. He had a keen eye for brown officers, and, as he said, there were so many Filipino generals and such folk, that there were enough for everybody, even after he had taken his multitudinous pick.

It was not long before the mighty ones at staff headquarters became quite familiar with Johnny's ways. Our soldier soon found himself in demand, a demand which, from details of special and hazardous duty, occasional at first, but finally very frequent, won for him a sergeant's stripes, and regrets at headquarters that it was not possible to immediately decorate

his shoulders with strap and bar. Never did better man wear non-com's stripes.

The sergeant is the pivot around which, as upon an axis, revolves the discipline and efficiency of the rank and file. He is the key-stone of both the individual and company arch of courage. Johnny was all that a disciplinarian should be, and more, he was idolized by the men. Twice was he wounded by a ball that smashed several ribs and narrowly missed taking out so much of his chest wall that, as he said, his heart and lungs would have been subject to indecent exposure. Again did the little "brown bellies" get him,—with a bolo this time. But Johnny's bayonet was a fraction of a second too quick for the luckless Filipino who wielded the "chopper" and the heavy blade missed the vitals by a hair. A siege of typhoid followed, but Johnny said, when the surgeon wanted to have him sick-leaved home. "Hell! no. It wouldn't be business, an' besides, I'm at home now—anyhow, as near as I'll ever be. Shootin', cuttin' and typhoid never was calculated to kill gutter snipes, an' so long as I keep away from water, which is the only thing that I hain't tried, I reckon I'll pull through. Then there's old Miss Krag, here," and he tenderly patted his rifle,

“she can’t get any furlough, cause she hain’t had any pluggin’ or boloin’, or fever, an’ she’d be lonesome.” And so Johnny stayed at the front, and shot Filipinos, swore great oaths and—got well.

The Filipinos were “pacified,” so all the home papers said, save those few that were politically favorable to the democratic “outs” and opposed to the republican “ins.” A few boloed soldiers or native women and children were not evidences of war, they were mere “local disturbances, occasional manifestations of unrest, etc.” The men at the front and the friendly brown ones thought differently, but who cares what the pig under the knife thinks? Uncle Sam didn’t seem quite so certain of himself as the papers would have us believe he was. Whilst egging the eagle on to scream peans of victory as a soothing embrocation for such as might be restive under the war tax, he kept his weather eye open just the same. To clinch the matter of pacification, troops were ordered here and there into the towns adjacent to the swamps and rocky fastnesses where lurked the more troublesome of the ladrones. Small detachments were often sent, much smaller in some

instances than was safe, as the government learned to its sorrow.

Much of the outpost duty fell upon the —th Montana. K company was ordered to duty in the province of Zambales, island of Luzon, and took up its quarters at Poombato, a place which could be called a town by courtesy only. It was nothing more than a handful of palm thatched huts, inhabited chiefly by old men, women and children who couldn't become enrolled with their "pacified" brethren who, bolo in hand, were lurking in the neighboring hills and thickets, awaiting a chance for a sudden dash upon the enemy and a merry bololing in the camp of the Americanos. The men of K company were no "kickers," as they were wont to express it, but the idea of rotting in the wilds while trying to protect a few miserable natives from possible outlaws who were their own kith and kin, and with whom the protected ones kept in pretty close and friendly touch, was not the pleasantest.

The men of K company knew the Filipino—knew him root and branch—they had fought him long enough, the Lord knows, and had discovered that caution was the price of sound throats. Their commander, Captain Benning,

was ever a discreet officer and careful of his men, above all he knew that somewhere in the vicinity hovered the worst of all the brigands and cut throats the Philippines had yet produced, "Captain" Agramonte, but the deadly monotony of their daily duties was more than the men could stand. Despite warnings and, it must be confessed, not infrequently despite strict orders, the men would stray away into the jungle, often in quest of a scrap with stray Filipinos, sometimes seeking such excitement as shooting wild game affords. These little excursions were apparently safe enough at first. No accidents happening, however, the men grew bolder, and roamed about almost at will, and then the trouble came. Man after man was found boloed, or disappeared as if the earth had swallowed him up. On one occasion a small searching party, in quest of a missing comrade, was ambushed and narrowly escaped annihilation. Captain Benning was not left long in doubt as to whom he was indebted for the loss of his men. The ghastly, recently severed head of one of his men was hurled from the brake one night into camp, rolling, as chance would have it, its bloody way to the very door of the captain's own

tent. Affixed to the awful thing was a scurrilous note signed, "Agramonte."

Captain Benning was a brave officer, with just enough revenge corpuscles in his blood to make the possession of Agramonte's person the one thing in all the world to be desired. This last atrocity was more than he could endure. Agramonte's life he must and would have. He knew well enough that there was but one way to kill or capture the outlaw. Having but one company at his command he could not well send a large party against the enemy. Indeed, the entire company was scarcely large enough to make a punitive expedition safe. Whatever was done must of necessity be done by strategy, and by a small party. A set plan was impossible. What was wanted was a "man," and the captain thought that he knew where to find him. Turning to his orderly he said, "Tell Sergeant Blank that I want him to report to me at once."

Johnny promptly appeared at the captain's quarters and stood respectfully at attention, awaiting his commander's pleasure.

"Sergeant," said the captain, pointing to the outlaw's grim token of defiance, "do you know Agramonte when you see him?"

"I think I do, sir," replied Johnny.

"Well, Sergeant, I want him, and I want him badly. If anybody can get him, you can. You have done plenty of scouting. What do you think about it?"

Johnny glanced at the gory head of his comrade, lying at the captain's feet, and his jaws set ominously. He answered through his teeth:

"I think I'll get him sir, or he'll get me."

"Very well, then," said the captain, "go after him, and be sure you get him."

"Alive, sir?"

"Alive if you can; I wish to make an example of him, for the benefit of those cut-throats of his, but don't take a chance of losing him. I want to see him at my tent door, and a few holes more or less in his miserable carcass will not mar his beauty much in my eyes."

"All right, sir; any instructions?"

"None whatever, Sergeant, except to get him, get him sure and as quick as the Lord 'll let you."

The captain rose, and with a total disregard of military etiquette held out his hand and said,

"Good luck to you Johnny, and don't forget that you are worth more to me than that d—d renegade. If you don't land him, be sure to bring yourself back. We are old comrades, you know."

"Don't bother your head about me, Captain," replied Johnny, his eyes glistening, as he grasped his commander's hand; "I'll come back all right, and I'll bring that d—d renegade with me. We may neither of us be pretty to look at when we drop in on you, but you can bet we'll get here together," and Johnny disappeared in the darkness.

An army scout travels "light" and when he is about to set out on an expedition, his preparations are a marvel of speed and simplicity. Johnny was even speedier than usual in getting ready for his perilous mission. He had little to do save to strap on a brace of navies, his canteen and haversack and say goodbye to his "bunko." The latter, as his friend was leaving, handed him an enormous bowie knife, saying, "Here's a western lancet that I want you to take with you, just for luck. We like 'em out our way. They don't miss fire, nor go off half cocked, and they can't be beat for tickling the solar plexus." The

bunky forgot to mention the bowie's chief merit, that it wasn't noisy. This was left for Johnny's own exploitation.

Johnny loosened his belt, slipped the bowie upon it and said, "Thanks, and speakin' of the West reminds me of a little trick one of the boys taught me when we was cooped up in Manila. I almost forgot this," and reaching up he took down a coil of rope that hung at the side of the tent. This he slung over his shoulder, sash-wise.

In less than half an hour after his interview with his captain, our soldier slipped through the picket lines and plunged into the jungle. He knew that he must get beyond the outskirts of the town under cover of darkness if he would elude the watchful eyes of the Filipinos who hung about in the surrounding hills and jungles. Had he not started before dawn it would have been necessary to await the coming of the next night, in order to leave the camp unobserved by the enemy.

Agramonte's base of operation was so well known that the uninitiated may naturally wonder why he had not been captured long before. It requires only a moderate knowledge of the native character and of the nature of

the country to understand why Captain Benning with the small force at his command, had hitherto refrained from attempts at the outlaw's capture. A formal campaign against him would have necessitated beating up the Filipinos precisely as game is beaten up in a battue. This would have required a very large and powerful force. Agramonte, fully cognizant of the situation, had established himself at Masillo, a little village in the foot hills less than five miles from the camp of the Americans, where he conducted himself precisely as if there was no such thing existing as the United States of America or a hostile army. The Batolan river lay between him and his enemies in khaki. This was a turbulent mountain stream of considerable width, with no ford nearer than some seven or eight miles from the renegade's headquarters. Granting that his enemies succeeded in crossing the stream, which was not an easy thing for a small force such as he believed would probably be sent against him to do under fire, he had but to hide himself amid his native rocks and ravines and he could snap his brown fingers at the hated Americanos.

Knowing the outlaw's lair, and the character

of the country, Johnny had evolved his plans of campaign before leaving camp, while he was hastily preparing for the expedition. From his experience in scouting expeditions he knew that the only way to succeed in his mission was to beat the Filipino chief at his own game, by taking him completely by surprise at such time as he might be found separated from his companion ladrones. The lariat which Johnny had slung over his shoulder was perhaps the most methodic and pertinent of his preparations.

Travelling through the Luzon brake is neither easy nor comfortable, even in broad daylight, but at night it is practically impossible to the inexperienced traveller. But Johnny was no novice at the business in which he was engaged, and seemed to instinctively know the weak spots in the wild tangle of trees and brake. He was apprised from time to time that he was an intruder in the jungle. Troops of monkeys chattered at him saucily as they swung down from limb to limb of the trees to get a nearer view of the strange object that had disturbed their sleep. Having seen him, they screamed affrighted warnings to the other jungle folk and fled back to the topmost

boughs, there to hurl defiant challenges at the intruder. Enormous bats beat their foul wings fiercely against his face as he toiled on, their whizzing, whirling flight sending the heavy, strangely perfumed night mist of the tropic wood pulsing against his face in dank waves. Once, as he crept through the brake, almost on his hands and knees, he nearly fell face down upon a huge creature of some kind. Johnny never knew the nature of it, for startled as he was, the beast was more so. It sprang up with a frightened yelp and crashed off through the jungle, snarling back at the strange thing that had roused him from his peaceful slumbers.

Again, as our soldier, breathing more freely as he emerged from the brake into the open, was skirting a little glade in the forest, a monster serpent dangling its death dealing loops downward from a bough struck him fairly upon the chest, with a resounding whack that almost knocked the breath out of him. A man less nervy and experienced would have been entangled in the cruel coils of the gigantic reptile, but with a quick push of his powerful arm against the cold, clammy folds of the awful thing and a cat-like spring aside he was free.

Courageous as he was, this encounter made his flesh creep. But none the less, he saw a ludicrous side to the incident, and muttered to himself, "Major Brice used to say somethin' to me about the early bird catchin' the worm. I'm the early bird, all right, all right, but that worm's a little too big for Johnny's craw. Wonder what the dear old major 'd think o' that chap, anyhow. I suppose he'd like to bottle him."

And there were other things, less pretentious relatives of the giant snake who so nearly did for Johnny. As his feet stumbled on through the luxuriant tangle of tropic weeds and grasses, he heard certain rustlings and hissings that warned him of the nearness of reptiles of lesser bulk, whose fangs were carriers of liquid death, relentless and sudden, yet slow enough for the victim to suffer the agonies of the damned ere he died.

But Johnny pulled through the night without mishap and, worn and haggard, as morning dawned, he found himself upon the banks of the Batolan. Here he knew he must stop until nightfall. A white man's head bobbing up and down in the stream would have made too good a target for even Filipino marksmen,

wretched shots though they are, to miss at such easy range. It would have been suicidal to attempt to swim the river in broad day light, besides, at that point the current was too swift for a tired man to breast. Johnny was nearly exhausted, so after a bite from the small store in his haversack and a pull at his canteen he laid down amid the bamboos that fringed the river bank to await nightfall with what patience he could.

Tired as Johnny was, he did not dare sleep. The day was excessively warm and it was not easy to keep awake, but under the stimulus of several parties of Filipinos of whom he caught a glimpse at various times as they passed to and fro on the hill sides upon the opposite side of the stream, he managed to fight off the drowsiness with which his fatigue and the tropic heat combined to overpower him. He did not dare to even light his pipe, the soldier's consolation, lest he attract the attention of the enemy, and with nothing to help him while away the hours the day seemed almost interminable.

But the fiercely glowing red ball of the sun finally sank behind the hills to westward, and the tropic twilight mist began to rise from brake and stream. Not far from the bank op-

posite the spot where Johnny lay concealed, he noted through the gathering shadows the twinkle of lights upon the opposite hillside and the glow of what appeared to be a camp fire, and said to himself, "I reckon that must be Masillo, an' if it is I'm pretty close to that d—d brown belly's headquarters. It won't do to let him see me first. We hain't been introduced and he might cut me."

Rising to his feet and pulling himself together, "just to get the kinks out," Johnny crept cautiously through the brake up stream, with the intention of crossing at a point which would be safer from detection by the enemy. He had traversed the river bank about a mile, when he noticed that the river had widened out considerably and was dotted here and there by a number of broad, low lying, bamboo covered islands, their outlines being clearly discernible in the light of the gorgeous moon which was just rising. "This ought to be a good place to get across," he thought. "I'm likely to find bottom part of the way, an' the walkin' must be purty fair on them islands."

Divesting himself of all his clothing and accouterments save his belt and lariat, Johnny rolled his effects into as compact a form as pos-

sible and with his bundle under his arm waded out toward the nearest island. The water rose only to his waist, and although it was hard to keep his footing in the swift running current, he was not long in reaching his destination. The brake was so dense upon the island that he found it easier to traverse its lower shore to the opposite side. Between the first island and the next one, a little further down stream, the water was deeper and swifter than before, and our soldier had to swim for it. When he reached the second island he was pretty well blown and was compelled to take a breathing spell. From the second island to the opposite bank the water was very shallow and easily forded, a circumstance of which, as the sequel proved, the Filipinos themselves were fully cognizant, and of which they had showed their appreciation by stationing a reception committee for possible invaders at that point.

Johnny clambered up the bank and pausing in a diminutive clearing near the water, proceeded to leisurely dress himself. He was just stooping to lace his leggings when two forms sprang upon him from the brake, one of them landing upon his back. As he went down under the sudden rush, he was dimly conscious of a heavy cutting



"JOHNNY GOT A STRANGLE HOLD ON THE FILIPINO'S
THROAT WITH HIS LEFT HAND, WHILE WITH
HIS RIGHT HE DREW HIS KNIFE."

blow upon his head. As he struggled with his foes he felt the hot blood streaming down from his temple and into his eyes. He managed to turn face upward as the Filipino bore him to the earth, but for a few seconds he could do no more than grip his man tightly by the body and prevent his striking him with the bolo with which he was armed. The other Filipino tried frantically to land a blow upon the Americano, but without success, as his comrade was most persistently and unwillingly in the way. As soon as his wits returned Johnny, suddenly letting go of his adversary's body, got a strangle hold on the Filipino's throat with his left arm, while with his right hand he drew his bowie. Two quick jabs with the knife, and the soldier knew that this part of the drama was over. Practiced wrestler that he was, it was an easy matter to slip from under the limp body, and spring to his feet and bound away to the edge of the little clearing.

Running away was farthest from Johnny's mind. He wheeled about and faced the second Filipino who, having recovered from his astonishment at the denouement of the struggle in which he had taken a subordinate part, rushed toward the soldier, swinging his terrible bolo

with the evident intention of bisecting him post haste. Johnny, nothing loth, awaited the rush, bowie in hand, as calmly as if he were on parade. And then came a dodging and cutting match that was as unfair as a two foot bolo wielded by an uninjured Filipino, opposed to a ten inch blade in the hands of a wounded soldier could make it. But Johnny was an athlete, and his pugilistic training was not lost in such a contest.

In the first mad rush of his foe Johnny was very nearly done for. As he sidestepped to avoid the heavy Filipino blade, his foot slipped and he nearly fell. The weapon missed his head but inflicted a severe wound upon his right shoulder, crippling for the moment his sword arm. Feeling himself growing faint, he soon determined to mix matters with his opponent who, after missing his stroke, had sprung back preparatory to another rush. As the Filipino closed in with a vicious sweep at his enemy's head, Johnny transferred his knife to his left hand and suddenly ducked under the descending blade squarely into the arms of the Filipino, who instinctively grappled with him, and forever lost the opportunity of using his own weapon. One short-arm swing of the bowie and

the Filipino, cut through the chest, hung limp in the soldier's arms. The weight of his foe bore Johnny to the ground, where he lost consciousness, the two combatants lying locked together like two wild beasts that had fought each other to the death.

All through the night the two men lay motionless upon the ground, to all appearances lifeless. Meanwhile a storm blew up and just as the morning dawned the rain fell in torrents. Johnny had merely fainted from loss of blood, and the cool raindrops beating upon his face revived him. At first, as he became conscious, he had no clear conception of where he was or of what had happened. He had a hazy recollection of a struggle, but not the slightest notion of what it was all about nor with whom or how many he had fought. As his mind gradually recovered itself, however, he remembered all the details of the battle in which, as he now discovered, he had been victorious. Disengaging himself from the body of his late antagonist, he rolled and crawled away a little distance, and finally sat up and looked about the arena in which they had battled.

The Filipino who had first attacked the soldier lay a little distance away, stark dead.

The other, however, was still living. As Johnny looked in his direction the body moved unmistakably with a slight convulsive movement of the chest, and a faint groan escaped the lips.

"Hello," said Johnny, "my friend over there seems pretty lively for a corpse. Sorry I did n't cut just right. I'd have saved Uncle Sam and Sergeant Blank a lot o' trouble. I s'pose I'd orter fix the d—d cuss up, story book style, but charity begins at home, and it's me for first crack at the aid package."

With this the sergeant proceeded to take account of stock. After a careful survey of his wounds, he dressed and bandaged them as best he could, and took a bracer from the whiskey flask, with which the haversack of the army scout who knows his business is always supplied. He followed the stimulant with a meagre breakfast from his rations.

It was not long before Johnny was strong enough to get upon his feet. The first thing he did was to inspect the wounded Filipino. To facilitate matters he kneeled beside the fellow and rolled him over upon his back. As he glanced at the cruel, savage face, it seemed strangely familiar. Looking at the face more critically, as suspicion of the identity of his

fallen foe entered his mind, he brushed back the mat of coarse hair that covered the Filipino's forehead. There, running transversely across the brow, close to the tangled hair, was a livid, jagged scar of an old time sword stroke. Forgetting his own wounds he sprang to his feet in amazed delight and exclaimed, "Agramonte, or I'm an Indian!"

The Filipino was evidently recovering consciousness. He too, had suffered from a severe loss of blood. Johnny examined his enemy's wound and found that the blood had clotted and was no longer flowing. He applied a compress and bandage and gave the wounded man a swig of whiskey, with the result that he soon revived sufficiently to recognize his surroundings. If he remembered the encounter that had been so unlucky for him he made no sign. As soon as he became conscious, he ceased groaning and made no sound thereafter. He lay as stolidly as a manikin, his beady black eyes watching every move the soldier made.

Noting that his patient was rounding up nicely, and fearing that he might cry for assistance, Johnny proceeded to make the situation clear to the Filipino. Not daring to use fire arms for fear of bringing a swarm of brown

bellies about his ears, he had not yet drawn a revolver. He did so now, however, although with as little intention of using it as ever. Leveling the navy at the wounded man's head he said: "I don't know whether you savvy my language or not, Mr. Agramonte, but I reckon you can savvy sign language all right. You saved me a lot o' trouble when you an' your partner did the wild cat act on my back. I was sure lookin' for you, but I didn't expect to come up with you quite so immediate. Seein' as how you saved me so much trouble, I'll give you a tip that 'll save you some. If you open your yap, even to whisper, I'll scatter your brains all over the province. I've got a pressin' engagement to take you to headquarters, and this is a mighty good place to start from. It's just about time to mosey, too, for some of your friends is likely to rubber down here to see what's doin'."

Agramonte evidently "savvied," but he contented himself with glaring at his conqueror as some captive savage beast might have done. It required little discernment to guess what he would have done to the Americano, had their respective positions been reversed.

Still menacing the Filipino with the revolver, Johnny compelled him to struggle to his

feet as best he could. Unwinding his lariat he put the noose about his captive's neck. Thinking evidently that he was about to be hanged and thus receive poetic justice, Agramonte would have cried out, had not his captor suddenly tugged at the lasso, thus choking the sound of alarm in his brown throat. The strangling process was quite effective, and when the noose was loosened the prisoner was as docile as could have been desired.

Leaving some six feet of rope between himself and his captive, the sergeant, after adjusting the noose, wound the other end of the lariat about his own body. This done, he said, "Now, Mr. Filipino, you can't lose me, and if you don't object we'll take a little stroll together. Just to be perlite I'll let you go first, so just mosey right along an' don't look back or make any noise. If you bat your eye in a way I don't like, away 'll go your brains to fertilize the Island of Luzon. It's us for the river, so skip along, an' make it lively."

But making it lively was easier said than done. Neither the prisoner nor the captive was in condition to travel rapidly, and the mere effort of clambering down the river bank was almost the limit of their endurance. But

Johnny shut his teeth together like the bars of a steel trap, and pushing the tottering Filipino roughly into the water, waded slowly after him, retracing the same route he had traversed in crossing the river. In their exhausted condition it was not easy for the men to maintain their footing. Agramonte's feet slipped from under him several times, bringing him face downward on the sand and rocks of the river bed. The soldier, although himself in little better form than his prisoner, by a supreme effort raised the latter to his feet and relentlessly urged him on. The island reached, the two fell exhausted.

As the soldier and his prisoner lay panting upon the ground it seemed to Johnny that rest was the only thing worth living for. He did not dare gratify his inclination in that direction, however. The body of the dead Filipino was likely to be found at any moment, for it was probable that he had been on picket duty, and if so, a relief would probably be sent to that point before long. Pursuit once begun, escape would be well nigh impossible. Should he be captured the soldier knew only too well what would happen. Another ghastly token

of Agramonte's affection would be sent to the American camp.

Staggering to his feet, Johnny fairly dragged his prisoner to a standing posture. He compelled the Filipino to take several swallows of the whiskey, drank a stiff one himself, and driving Agramonte before him continued on his way around the edge of the island. When they arrived at the opposite side, the Filipino, gazing terror stricken at the swift current in mid-stream, stopped short and shook his head in feeble protest against entering the water.

"It does look middlin' dubious, that's a fact, an' it's goin' to be a close call, but we've got to make it," said Johnny. "I promised the Captain that I'd land you at the door of his tent, and land you I will. He'd be glad to have your head to even up for poor Jack Kennedy's, but it'll please him better if I deliver your ugly carcass to him whole. In with you, d—n you, and no monkey business or I'll"—and Johnny cocked his revolver, which clicked suggestively.

The Filipino slipped into the water and would have gone down post haste, had not the soldier supported him by his tangle of coarse hair. And then began the supreme struggle.

Many times as he battled with the current did Johnny regret that he had not decapitated Agramonte and taken his head into camp. But once in the swift running water he would not weaken, nor would he let go of his prisoner. He resolved that if Agramonte went down, he would drown with him, rather than return to the captain empty handed. Twice the two struggling men were swept under, but thanks to Johnny's bull dog grit rose again. They were swimming diagonally against the current, and it was almost miraculous that both men were not drowned. Had the middle channel been a few yards wider, they certainly would never have lived to reach the next island.

But reach the island they did, and with a desperate effort Johnny pulled himself upon dry land, dragging his half dead charge after him. After a somewhat longer rest than before, the two again entered the water, and with great difficulty waded to shore on the opposite side of the Batolan. Once the awful strain of crossing the river was over, there was no longer any choice in the matter of resting; both men fell exhausted; Johnny had barely strength enough left to crawl into the brake

out of the range of vision of possible stray Filipinos and pull his half dead captive after him.

The sun was well up in the heavens and beating mercilessly down upon captor and captive before Johnny was able to move. He finally managed to get upon his feet again and decided to take a fresh start toward the camp. It seemed safer to take the chance of meeting hostile natives in the jungle in broad daylight, than to remain until nightfall and then run the risk of being found by a searching party of the enemy. The Filipino, however, was unable to rise. He was wounded no more severely than his captor, and surely should have been no worse affected by the fatigue of his journey, but he was a prisoner, and lacked the spirit of a victor, and, like most children of the tropics, he had not the physical nor moral fibre of which strenuous heroes are made. He was certainly "all in," much to our soldier's dismay. Urging and threats alike were without avail, and when dragged to his feet the renegade fell to the ground again as limp as a rag. Knowing that camp was but a few hours distant, Johnny's disgust at the situation was most violent, and he swore in salvos.

"You d—d cut-throat, you're more trouble

than your miserable neck is worth! You might have been game enough to stick to the finish. But you wasn't, so there you are, an' I reckon it's up to me to get you to camp the best way I can. Come, Aggie, old boy, an' rest on this bosom;" saying which, the soldier helped the Filipino to his feet once more, and half carrying, half dragging the almost helpless man, struck out through the brake.

The will is a wonderful thing;—it conquers worlds,—but no man's will is so strong that extreme physical weakness will not defeat it. Johnny's nerve was impregnable, but wounded and fatigued as he was, his physical strength could not withstand the additional strain put upon it by the endeavor to assist the Filipino through the jungle. Then too, his wounds had become inflamed and very painful. He felt alternately hot and cold, and finally had a chill that fairly made his teeth rattle. This was followed by a tremendous fever. The poor fellow felt as though he were on fire. Things began to look queer. From time to time he fancied he saw fantastic shapes amid the brake. Sometimes huge, fiercely snarling animals seemed to brush by him. Again, a Filipino, twice as large as life, leered at him from behind every

bush and tree. Once he fancied he saw the huge serpent that had flailed his chest the night he spent in traversing the jungle. Its horrid mouth yawned widely, and he heard it calling in a hoarse roaring voice the multitudinous folk of the jungle. And the soldier knew that the delirium of wound fever was upon him, and feared lest he should lose his senses altogether.

Bad as was his captor's condition, the Filipino's was much worse. When nature could stand no more, and Johnny was finally compelled to drop the renegade, it was evident that the latter's end was in sight. A few drops of whiskey poured down his throat revived him for a brief period, but it was hate's labor lost, for within the hour Agramonte gave a faint expiring sigh and joined the shades of his brown skinned ancestors.

Johnny had fallen exhausted beside the body of his captive and supporting himself on his elbow had watched, in his lucid intervals, the passing of his chances of delivering the living Agramonte to Captain Benning. The Filipino dead, there was was but one thing to be done. The gathering of evidence was as simple as it was gruesome; he drew his knife and

decapitated the body, making in his weakened condition, it must be confessed, rather a "hacky," tearing job of it. The head removed and tied by its long hair to his belt, Johnny rose to his feet and totteringly resumed his journey toward camp.

As our soldier uncertainly blundered on through the brake, his fever rose higher and higher and his delirium increased. There were no longer any lucid intervals, and the direction of his steps was largely a matter of chance. Good luck, rather than volition guided him, but while his course was the proper one, luck was not always with him. Several times his feet became entangled in the undergrowth and he fell heavily. Again, as he struggled to his feet and stumbled blindly on, he crashed against a tree so violently that only the fictitious strength of delirium prevented his being incapacitated from further effort. But every step was bring him nearer his comrades, and nearer the fulfillment of the promise which no longer meant anything to him, poor boy.

The evening relief of sentries had just been made by Company K. The sun had dropped his huge glowing ball of molten copper behind

the hills to the west of Masillo. The waning light was playing hide and seek with the flickering, erratic shadows of wood and brake. At the edge of the little clearing just outside the town stood a khaki clad sentry. He was leaning upon his rifle and gazing abstractedly into the jungle, thinking, perhaps, of that rancher's daughter in far-away Montana. As he stood there musing, his attention was suddenly attracted by a rustling sound amid the undergrowth some distance away. He instantly brought his gun to a ready, and peered excitedly into the jungle. The sound grew plainer.

"Halt! Who goes there?"

A shape as of a man creeping stealthily along through the brake upon his hands and knees became dimly discernible. Again the sentry's voice rang out.

"Halt, or I fire!"

The shape, now plainly that of a man, crept nearer and still nearer.

The Krag cracked like a huge whip, a thin, filmy cloud of smoke arose from the nitro, and the creeping form in the brake fell forward upon its face without a sound.

"Corporal of the guard, post seven!" shouted the sentry.

The regulation call was unnecessary for, immediately the rifle cracked, a squad of the sentry's comrades with the corporal at their head rushed to the spot.

"I've bagged a brown belly, I think," said the sentry, waving his hand in the direction of the spot where his quarry had fallen.

The corporal, followed by his men, cautiously approached the spot indicated by the sentry. A few minutes search in the cane and they came upon a body clothed in tattered khaki. Hanging from the belt at the dead man's side, was the recently decapitated head of a Filipino.

The startled corporal turned the body over upon its back. He gave one horrified glance of recognition at the dead man's face and exclaimed, "My God! It's Johnny!"

Tenderly the men in khaki raised the limp form of their fallen comrade and silently bore it past the horror stricken sentry into the camp. Halting before the captain's tent, they laid the body down and covered it reverently with a blanket.

The corporal approached the door of the tent and addressing his commander, said sorrowfully, his eyes wet with tears, "Sir, Johnny has returned."

Captain Benning sprang to his feet and exclaimed, "Where is he; why does he not report?"

"He is here, sir," replied the corporal. The captain went to the door of the tent, and not seeing Johnny, looked at the corporal inquiringly.

The corporal pointed to the body lying almost at the officer's feet and said, "That's him, sir."

The captain raised the blanket, and gazed long and silently at the dead soldier and the gory testimonial of duty performed that lay beside him.

The silence was finally broken by the corporal, who said, as his hand rose slowly in salute—

"Sir, Johnny has made good."

And the captain replied, huskily:

"Yes, boys, too good."

MY FRIEND THE UNDERTAKER

I have become quite convinced that the most entertaining man in the world is the undertaker. Now, I do not pretend to say that there is anything original about my observations. Others have in all probability frequently commented on his peculiarities—but I nevertheless feel that it is my duty to give him a little attention in order to repay him, at least in part, for the many favors received at his hands.

Let it be understood that I am no more indebted to the “post-medical profession” than are many other physicians, but I am peculiar in that I always like to express my gratitude to those who have befriended me—and if there is any office that friendship can perform for us, equal to concealing one’s mistakes and hiding one’s failures from the gaze of a carping and cruel world, I don’t know what it is.

Another reason for my determination to devote a little personal attention to the undertaker is that he is a much maligned and misunderstood person. He is supposed to be heartless and



"CUSTOM-MADE SORROW"



unfeeling, and is usually considered austere and unapproachable; some say he has no generosity.

It shall be my pleasure, as well as my duty, to correct these erroneous impressions regarding a noble craft that has always taken a lively interest in its patrons—an interest that has never been reciprocated by those most benefited by the undertaker's labors.

There may be captious critics who will differ with my belief that the undertaker is the most entertaining man in the world, on the ground that those whom he entertains never give him any *encores*. This is very easily explained. There are no gallery gods at his entertainments, and the people in the boxes are never demonstrative. They are people of taste and discretion, and rather reserved and sedate than otherwise;—knowing when they have had enough of a good thing, they do not attempt to recall the artist. Unquestionably, the chief patrons of the undertaker are people of refined susceptibilities and not given to demonstration. Even when a clod is rung in upon the boards, they give no sign of anything but courteous and silent attention—although the nerves of others in the audience may be fairly set on edge. It is hardly nec-

essary to expatiate further on my first proposition.

The austerity of the undertaker is more apparent than real, and is the result of association rather than innate acerbity of feeling. Even when he is iciest and most frigid in his ways it is for the benefit of others. By such a demeanor he enables his patrons to maintain their composure even under circumstances the most trying and in all kinds of weather. What though he does shroud his real feelings in an atmosphere of chilling reserve, so long as his heart is warm and true! Were he less calm and philosophic, he might err on the side of sympathy and ere long some of his friends would find that they had unconsciously been placed in a very bad box.

As to his being unapproachable, I believe that the undertaker is misunderstood. It is true that he does not thrust himself forward in a pretentious manner—as do some people of inferior breeding—nor has he ever been known to meet a patron half way, but just let one of your friends hint that you need his services and see how quickly he will put in an appearance. And he will not pay you unnecessarily prolonged visits either, and should

you be compelled to entertain him for a time, he is a quite inexpensive guest—he always furnishes his own board. He is even likely to be offended if you force your hospitality upon him. One of my friends once made this mistake, and the undertaker gave him a great laying out, I assure you.

We mustn't be too hard upon the undertaker, then, even though he is a trifle stiff and conventional in his ways. His work furnishes him with subjects for contemplation which are so serious, and of such monumental importance, that it is small wonder he should acquire a somewhat funereal and solemn demeanor.

I have often marveled at the equability of temper displayed by the undertaker. I never heard of his swearing at, or using rough language to his patrons. He has such a soothing way with him, too; whenever he notices that his patron is inclined to get a little hot-headed he does everything in his power to allay his warmth, knowing full well that the man will get cooled down after a while. And his judgment is rarely at fault—the other fellow always does cool down. You see, it's a poor quarrel that won't keep—and the under-

taker's differences with his patrons are no exception to the rule.

It has always been a source of wonderment to me, that any one could accuse the undertaker of being heartless and unfeeling. Why, I have known undertakers who were the acme of tender susceptibility and delicacy of feeling. One mortuary gentleman whom I knew, had such a sympathetic vein in his composition that he used to mix lamp black with his embalming fluid. So considerate and thoughtful of him, was it not? And shall we say of such men, "They are heartless and unfeeling?" Never!

And what shall we say of the "funeral director" who had buried six husbands for a lady, and who, knowing how sensitive she was upon the subject, upholstered her own mortuary receptacle with white satin marked with six delicate bands of heliotrope? Could any human being display a finer intuitive perception of the eternal fitness of things?

No, the undertaker is not unsympathetic, and he is delicacy personified.

Let us cultivate the undertaker—he does all he can to cultivate us. And he is an unselfish cultivator too—he knoweth full well

that what he soweth he cannot reap. Let us cultivate him, therefore, and do our best to repay him for his kindness to humanity. And we may possibly profit thereby, for pleasant associations retard the decay of these mortal frames of ours—the remorseless scythe of time blunts upon those fortunate mortals who are favored by the kindly offices of the skillful undertaker. To them we may not inappropriately say, “How well preserved you are!”

How well, indeed!

It would seem unnecessary to say that the popular notion regarding the undertaker’s lack of generosity is wrong—the fact should be self-evident. I feel, however, that my whole duty would not be done, did I not say that in my opinion the undertaker is one of the most generous of men. What merchant would ever dismiss a patron without an endeavor to secure his future patronage? None, I fancy. But not so your undertaker—he is willing, aye, even anxious, to let somebody else have his patrons after he has filled their first order. He is often, apparently, very glad to get his customers off his hands—not caring a whit if some professional rival gets their custom. And the social position of his patron seems to make no material differ-

ence—indeed, the “higher” the person, the more anxious the undertaker is to see the case fall into some rival’s hands. Some might say that this is due to a disposition to make game of the customer, but I don’t believe it.

There is one characteristic that distinguishes the undertaker from the common herd of men with mercantile instincts; he is scrupulously honest. He always gives full measure. This is very comforting to his patrons—especially those who like a comfortable fit. There is not a tailoring establishment in this blessed town that can show such a record as my friend Blank, the undertaker. Why, he has been making underclothing most all his life and never yet had a misfit turned back on his hands.

I tell you what, my good friends, the undertaker is the last man in the world with whom we have occasion to find fault.

I shall always entertain a high personal regard for some of the members of the undertaking profession.

If there is any attribute of man especially to be admired, it is a keen sense of humor. One of my undertaker friends—long since dead and gone to a just reward—one Nathaniel Black,

had this faculty developed to a preternatural degree.

There was something very impressive in the skillful manner in which Nathaniel used to conceal his humorous impulses while in the presence of death. His air of subdued merriment was, it is true, painful at times,—especially to himself—but this made it all the more impressive, as showing how some spirits can, by exercising will power, rise superior to their immediate surroundings.

When my friend Black was away from the actual presence of a corpse, he would unbend and show the true inward cussedness of the born humorist—with the evident self-sacrificing purpose of making life pleasant for his many friends. I happened to be one of the fortunate individuals who luxuriated in his friendship, and will cheerfully bear testimony to his devotion to the occupation of increasing the happiness of those about him. I feel that I could do no less, without stamping myself an ingrate.

One of the first things I did on entering practice, many years ago, was to invest in a typic doctor's buggy. This was done in self-defense—my face was as smooth as a pippin, my mustache was a caricature of the real

article and, taken all in all, there was nothing about me to inspire confidence. There was consequently but one thing to do, and that was to look and act as professional and prosperous as possible. It was with this end in view that I bought a buggy which looked unmistakably professional. As I had many friends and acquaintances, the moral effect of my turn-out was excellent. Had I been able to live on moral effect life would have been one vast smile of peaceful, well-fed joy and contentment, but I could not dine on any sort of effect, least of all upon the moral variety—which is a delusion and a snare.

Observing the marked attention that was paid to my equipage—and incidentally to the prosperous young doctor—I was well pleased; there were times when even my stomach was forgotten. It seemed to me that it was better to ride on an empty stomach than to walk upon a full one, provided I attracted sufficient attention to warrant my remaining in practice—or the hope of practice.

On some occasions the people I met appeared especially delighted with my appearance. Being self-satisfied with the notion that I was at last beginning to be appreciated, I made no

investigations to determine why so much more attention should be paid to me on some occasions than upon others. Such is the blinding power of self-conceit!

The advisability of hiring a colored driver suggested itself to me as an additional bait for popular applause. The idea so impressed me that I consulted one of my friends, Jack T—— about it. He advised me to wait a while, and seemed much entertained by my story of increasing popularity.

"Well, my boy," said he, smilingly, "you are indeed getting on in the world. Let me see—you lecture at a medical college, are surgeon to a free dispensary, physician to the order of Sons of the Blue Hen, physician to the hospital of the Big Sisters of the Rich, medical examiner for the Knights of the Empty Cupboard, and have the swellest turnout in town. You certainly are to be congratulated."

"Yes, Jack," I said, "I feel that my career is full of promise. By the way, old man, lend me a dollar, will you? This is my day for dining—every third day, you know. I'll pay you back next week."

"Certainly, doctor, I am happy to contribute to the comfort of one whose future is so brightly

illuminated by—promise. But, nevertheless, I still maintain that it is too early in the action for you to think of a colored coachman—every third day is—”

“Well, Jack,” I interrupted, “I must be going. Much obliged for your contribution to the free silver question. And, by the way, I’m just on my way to a meeting of the county commissioners. I’m slated for the County Hospital Staff.”

“Oh—h—h!” groaned Jack. “Has your ambition for wealth no bounds?”

A day or two later I was driving at a “sent for” gait, down Michigan Avenue, enjoying the evident admiring approbation of the people whom I met, when I saw my friend Jack a short distance ahead of me. He caught sight of me, stopped short and walked out to the curb, where he awaited me with a decidedly pleased expression on his handsome face.

“Hello, doctor!” he cried, as I drove up to him and reined in my horse. “You seem to have a bad case on hand.”

I winked and said, “Never mind the case. Come along with me for a ride. You have nothing else to do at this hour of the day.”

"Don't care if I do," replied my friend, stepping into my buggy forthwith.

My rig continued to attract considerable attention, much to Jack's edification, apparently. He finally said, "Well, doctor, your turn-out does excite the interest of the public, doesn't it?"

"So I have already informed you," I replied.

"Now, see here, doctor," said Jack, "you know that I am your friend. As a friend it is my duty to prevent you from acquiring that fatal pride which ever precedes a fall. I have hesitated to explain your popularity to you, but for your own sake and to preserve my own health, I must do so."

"Why, what the deuce do you mean?" I asked, in astonishment.

"Look behind you, doctor."

I looked through the rear window of my phaeton, and saw, about fifty yards behind me, a long, black, undertaker's wagon. On the seat, driving the sorry-looking steeds that were drawing the horribly suggestive vehicle, was—my friend, Nathaniel Black!

My undertaking friend was by no means quietly pursuing his gloomy way, but was gesticulating and winking suggestively to the

people on the side walk. He would first flirt his knobby thumb in my direction with a "D'ye see him?" gesture, and then, with a "That's what I'm here for" wink at everybody in sight, would grin all over his ugly face.

"A horrible coincidence!" I said faintly.

"Coincidence nothing!" howled Jack. "He's been doing that ever since you got your new buggy!"

And I bought wine for Nathaniel, and for Jack, and for sundry of their friends—yea, and for all who were within the sound of their voices in their daily walks.

But, I borrowed the wherewithal to settle from Jack. And, by and by, when practice came, I gave my patronage to Nathaniel's rivals.

Was the joke on me?

I wonder.

There are some doctors who do not understand the precise relation that the noble profession of undertaking desires to bear to the medical man. I freely confess that I myself was ignorant on this point until quite recently.

In a certain neighborhood of this metropolis dwells an undertaker of more than local renown whose reputation has been built up largely by

virtue of certain natural attributes that peculiarly fit him for the practice of his profession;—indeed, I have never met a man more to the manner born as regards fitness for his—shall I say, life work, or would “death work” be more appropriate?

Mr. Weeps is one of those mournful-looking persons, who seem to be constantly on the verge of tears. His expression is of a most sympathetic nature, and his eyes seem ever ready to exude the saline fluid that is so essential to the expression of sincere sorrow and regret. It might be remarked in passing, that there are numerous theories explanatory of the redness and humidity of those bleary orbs. Personally, I repudiate the onion theory altogether, and incline to the view that Mr. Weeps’ ocular peculiarities are dependent upon a combination of catarrh and polypi obstructing the nasal ducts. The “red eye” theory, advanced by one of his homeopathic constituents, is unworthy of consideration—especially as my lugubrious friend has been superintendent of a Sunday school for ten years and has served two terms as alderman.

But, whatever, may be the true explanation, Weeps’ eyes appear to have been especially

designed for his vocation. There is no other business—unless it be selling milk—to which those watery orbs could possibly be so well adapted as to undertaking.

I cannot claim to be on terms of intimacy with Mr. Weeps, and therefore do not feel warranted in attempting a detailed description of his many physical peculiarities—it would, however, be manifestly unfair to that most estimable gentleman, did I not dwell upon his eyes.

In the course of my semi-occasional peregrinations into Mr. Weeps' neighborhood, it transpired that one of my patients, with malice both prepense and aforethought—and consumption—did leave his little lung behind and hie him heavenward.

My kindly and well meant offices being no longer necessary, I naturally supposed that my responsibility had ceased. Not so, however—I was asked to recommend an undertaker. Having heard of Mr. Weeps and his phenomenal skill, I suggested that the family consult him as to the further management of the case. It seems that the family took my advice and was highly gratified with the pleasant and expeditious manner in which he performed his important functions. Indeed, the friends of the party

chiefly interested were so well pleased, that they thanked me a few days later, for recommending a gentleman of so much talent and such a sympathetic nature. I, of course, appreciated the family's gratitude, although the service rendered was quite unusual in my experience. Some unfeeling persons might say that the large life insurance policies left by the deceased were an element in the gratitude the family expressed to me, but, my dear reader, the very thought would be cruel and ignoble. Without confidence in human nature life would be miserable for all of us—and especially for doctors.

A few days after the funeral I received a call from Mr. Weeps. There seemed to be no end to the gratitude which was believed to be due me. Weeps had called to express his. He appeared to be as well pleased with the family as its members were with him.

I had never had the honor of meeting Mr. Weeps before, but his suave and cordial manner of introducing himself put me at my ease at once. The pleasure of acquaintance was of course mutual; it always is, you know.

After thanking me most cordially for my courtesy in referring the case of the late Mr. B—— to him, Mr. Weeps said:

"Now, doctor, I shall always be glad to have you remember me whenever you happen to be in my neighborhood."

I looked at him suspiciously, but saw no murder in his eye; he was as oily and plausible as ever.

"You see," he continued, "I have never had the honor of serving any of your patients before, and am very glad to have the opportunity of getting at least a small portion of your business."

The fellow seemed to be getting a little personal, but I made no remark, and he went on with his little piece.

"I will see you again in a few days, doctor—as soon as I have been compensated for my labors in this particular case. You, of course, understand that I will extend to you in this case, as in all future cases, the same courtesies I usually extend to the medical profession."

"Ah, indeed!" I exclaimed, "and of what do those courtesies consist?"

"Well," he replied, blandly, "they are quite liberal, considering the hard times—*about twenty-five per cent.*"

"'Tis strange—but true; for truth is always strange.
Stranger than fiction."

Among all the undertakers I ever knew my

feelings have been seriously disturbed by but one.

The gentleman in question is fat, jolly—when off duty—and a *bon vivant* of the ideal type. He is a ubiquitous sort of chap, and I find myself stumbling over him quite frequently—in the most unexpected places and under the most embarrassing circumstances. No social gathering seems to be complete without him—much to my discomfiture.

Words cannot express the embarrassment I have suffered at the hands of my fat friend. The worst of the matter is that the fellow really likes me—you need n't smile, gentle reader; his fondness does not depend upon reasons of a business nature; he likes me for myself alone. It will be seen, therefore, that I cannot afford to say anything which might by any possibility offend him. Aside from his affection for me, there is another motive which impels me to avoid personalities—he is high-strung and sensitive to a degree, and, if report speaks true, an expert boxer. To be sure, those whom he has boxed have said nothing about his proficiency, but where one's own personal safety is concerned one is justified in giving due weight even to idle rumor.

Now, it may seem strange that I should find fault with a man who has so sincere a regard for me as my fat friend, but, you know, even affection may be over done. When a fellow dresses up on Sunday preparatory to calling on his best girl, and his pet dog lavishes caresses with his muddy paws on those eleven dollar lavender trousers, patience ceases to be a virtue—and the comparison is by no means far-fetched.

Whenever I board a crowded street car, that obese mortuary fiend is always aboard—and at the end of the car farthest from me. He never fails to see and recognize me, although I go through as many motions as a professional contortionist in the vain and frantic effort to avoid recognition.

And then you should hear him yell, "Hello, Doc! How are all the folks?"

I assure him that I am greatly obliged for his rather suggestive solicitude for the welfare of my family, and that the folks are all well.

He next asks me how business is, and when I answer, "First rate," with a tone of sorrowing reproof he informs me that it is "very quiet with *him*." As if his business is not supposed to be invariably quiet!

The party sitting next me leaves the car; the undertaker pushes through the crowd and with a "How d'ye do, old man?" and an ostentatious pump-handle shake of my hand that almost costs me several fingers, takes the vacant seat beside me.

And now comes a conversation—his part of which is audible to everybody on the car—relative to the "last case we had together." The brute even mentions the party's name, which, if it happens to be a well known one, excites the rapt attention of everybody within earshot.

He next proceeds to ask me to dine with him "to-morrow" and comments on the "elegant time we had together last week."

Finally arriving at his destination, my demon bids me an affectionate good night and starts for the farther door of the car. I breathe a sigh of relief—but too soon. Having reached the platform he re-opens the door and bellows out—

"By the way, Doc! do you think old man Blank is going to pull through? Old friend of mine, you know—I'll probably be in on the case when the thing's over."

I went to the opera the other night hoping—aye, determined to enjoy myself, and

feeling that I was entitled to a little enjoyment, for I had had very little opera in my daily routine for some months. My wife was looking very well, and my mirror gave positive proof that my new dress suit was an unexceptionable fit. All things considered I had every reason to feel well satisfied with myself and the world at large.

But how vain are human hopes. We were hardly comfortably seated, before I saw in the box directly opposite mine—the fat undertaker who haunted my dreams!

I endeavored to avoid recognition, but it was no use. He saw me, and gesticulated so wildly to attract my attention that I was perforce obliged to respond in self-defense. The house being crowded, this little episode attracted much attention—especially on the part of numerous friends of the undertaker and myself, who, as luck would have it, happened to be present. These people smiled broadly; some even went so far as to wink significantly at each other.

The fat undertaker is one of those men who succeed in attracting attention at all times and under all circumstances. On this occasion he shone with effulgent brilliancy. He enjoyed

the play—there was no doubt about that—and proposed to make me enjoy it also. Whenever the performance especially pleased him, he applauded vociferously, quivering all over like a lump of calf's-foot jelly and gesticulating furiously in my direction. Having succeeded in attracting my attention, he would jerk his fat thumb in the direction of the artist who was favored with his approbation and nod emphatically at me.

The audience enjoyed my friend's enthusiasm and seemed quite anxious to know how *I* was enjoying it. I could n't enlighten it as intelligently as could have been wished, so I did the next best thing—I went out between acts to see a man—and found him so highly interesting that I forgot to go back. Suddenly remembering that my wife was still in the box, I sent an usher to inform her that I wasn't feeling well and was waiting for her at the door. Being a wise woman, she divined the cause of my indisposition and soon joined me. She did n't feel quite comfortable herself, and was glad to escape from—the opera.

I have forsworn society. I have bought an automobile, and if ever I go to the theater again—may the fat undertaker seize me!

A GRIM MEMENTO

My friend, Dr. Fairweather, was engaged when I called, but it so happened that I was in no hurry and could conveniently wait. I have since been glad that things happened as they did; had I not been compelled to wait and amuse myself as best I could, I probably should not have heard what to me was a most interesting story. The colored attendant who took my card and announced me to the doctor, returned and said:

"De doctah is right busy just now, suh. He says fo' you alls to be sho to wait, cayse he wants to see you mos' pow'ful. I reckon you alls better wait in dis yeh room, suh. De doctah says dat you must mek yo'sef to home."

The servant ushered me into a small apartment, evidently the doctor's "den," and handed me the morning paper, which I proceeded to hungrily devour. The paper was the first I had seen in a month—I was just returning from my summer outing trip, and had stopped

off *en route* at P. to see my old friend Fair-weather.

The doctor was detained for some time, and having finished reading my paper, I proceeded to inspect the curios with which the room was garnished. I had examined with great interest the fine collection of odd Indian relics and the queer weapons from the four quarters of the earth, and was returning to my seat by the window when a grinning human skull upon the mantel caught my eye.

It so happens that the human skull is of especial interest to me because of a certain hobby that I enjoy riding at odd moments. I am something of an enthusiast in the subjects of criminology and the relation of the contour and development of the skull to mental and moral qualities. It was with some curiosity therefore, that I picked up the skull and proceeded to critically examine it. I found it well worthy of study and regretted that I could give it only cursory attention.

The dwarfed frontal development; the great length of the face; the enormously large, protruding jaw; the huge orbits, with the great projecting bony prominences—the frontal bosses—above them; the general lightness of the

bones; the unsymmetrical conformation of the face and the twisted and undeveloped dome of the skull presented a picture that is very familiar to the student of criminal anthropology.

So absorbed was I in the contemplation of the gruesome relic I held in my hands, that I was not conscious of the entrance of Dr. Fairweather until he spoke.

"Hello, old man!—riding your hobby as usual, I see. No time for your friends, I suppose."

I grasped the doctor's welcoming hand and replied, "Well, as you were busy, I had to kill time as best I might with this gentleman. He is a poor conversationist, hence I was compelled to utilize him in any way that I could. I must admit that I have found him very interesting—inversely to his loquacity, in fact."

"Ah, indeed; and what do you make of him?"

"Looking for a chance to guy me, eh?" I replied. "Really, old fellow, time does not mellow you a bit. Well, guy away. I am not prepared to give you a critical dissertation on this particular skull. This much I will say, however—it has more of the ear marks of the degenerate than any I have seen for some time. The party who originally owned the skull

should have been a desperado, or a hold-up man, although he may have passed the hat in church for aught I know—which may be a distinction without a difference.”

Dr. Fairweather laughed heartily. “Well, I don’t know but that I ought to resent your criticisms of the skull. I can forgive your slam at the church, but it is my duty to inform you that the gentleman of whom that skull is a relic was a very particular friend of mine.”

“Oh, then you are keeping the skull as a memento of your friend. There’s no accounting for tastes, you know,” I said, watching the doctor suspiciously out of the corner of my eye and recalling that he had as strong a predilection for practical jokes as I had for skulls.

“Yes, that is precisely it,” replied the doctor seriously. I have two mementos of my dead friend; one—*post mortem*—you hold in your hand; the other—*ante mortem*—is here,” and he threw back from his forehead the long, wavy, dark hair in which threads of silver were beginning to show and pointed to a long, livid, jagged scar that traversed his left temple.

I looked at the doctor in surprise. Although I had known him for many years, I had never noticed his disfigurement.

"I don't think I ever told you the story, did I?" continued the doctor.

I replied in the negative, assuring my friend that nothing could please me better than to hear him tell it.

"Well, I'm through with patients for to-day, and if you will do me the honor of dining with me at the club, I shall be most happy to relate it to you."

"You will remember that I was formerly engaged in general practice in the little town of R— in Northern Minnesota. My field was an arduous one and I could not select my patients—on the contrary, I was mighty glad when they condescended to select me. It's quite different now; I can be 'in' or 'out,' as I may elect, when patients ring my bell. Better than all, I can ask an old friend to dine with me at the club. There is a club, thank heaven, and there is also the wherewithal nowadays."

"I was fortunate enough, early in my practice, to receive an appointment as the local surgeon of the St. Paul road for our little town.

The position was a sinecure in a way, but I captured an occasional accident case that paid something, and the position of surgeon to the

railroad gave me a certain amount of prestige among the country folk around. Then too, I had an annual pass over the road, and that helped some. It would have helped more if I had had time to ride and money for meals on the dining cars. Small though my railroad practice was, however, I had occasion to thank the Lord that I was a railroad surgeon and that one of my patients had a good memory, before I was done with the job.

"The winter of '80 and '81 was a hard one, and practice was not a simple, lightsome game. It seemed to me that when I had important work to do, my patient was always a long way off in some out of the way farm house, or at a crossing station where the trains ran every other week.

"The day before Christmas I received a call to attend a gunshot injury, about fifty miles from my home. The weather was abominable, being cold and stormy enough to make the hungriest and most ambitious young surgeon hesitate to face it. They get the blizzards from that devilish Medicine Hat at first hand up there, you, know—the raw stuff in the way of weather. But needs must when patients called, and as there was nothing to do but

face the music I took the first and only available train for X—.

“My patient lived some miles away from the little hen coop of a station, the several stores and half a dozen houses that constituted the little town. A couple of young country yokels, eighteen or twenty years of age, met me at the train with a buck-board. There was just snow enough drifting to make the roads almost impassable here and there, but not enough for sleighing, so that the trip was not the pleasantest I had ever experienced.

“It was supper time before I had finished with the wounded man, and I was as hungry as a Sioux Indian on a long trail in the Bad Lands. I was very glad to participate in the humble but abundant meal.

“Supper over, I was informed that there was just time to catch the south bound train—then to the buckboard and miserable roads again; the gawky country boys who had met me at the train still doing the honors. When we arrived at the station, what was my disgust to learn that my train was fully two hours late.

“The prospect of spending the entire evening at a little tumble down way station waiting for a belated train was too uninviting for adequate

description. As the storm was increasing every moment and the fierce wind was piling up the snow drifts higher and higher across the railroad tracks, there was no certainty that the expected train would come at all. My prospects for getting home that night were certainly dubious—locomotives stalled in snow drifts were sufficiently familiar to me to make me decidedly uneasy.

“My friends, the country boys, seeing my predicament, offered to stay with me until the train came, and although I protested feebly against their discommoding themselves to such an extent, I inwardly rejoiced when they showed their sincerity by insisting on remaining. Alas! had I but known the horrible thing that was soon to happen, I should have returned to their home with them rather than to have allowed the poor fellows to indulge their whole-souled notions of courtesy and hospitality.

“A cheery fire was burning in the stuffy little drum stove in the center of the common waiting room, and being pretty well chilled after our long, weary ride, I huddled up as close to it as I could without igniting my clothing. The two young farmers meanwhile inaugurated a playful wrestling bout which answered well in

lieu of the fire in starting up their circulation.

“In one corner of the room was a curtained recess, containing the station master’s bed, to which the owner had apparently retired early, as evidenced by the brassy, nasally whistling snores which from time to time rent the air of the stuffy apartment, making the environment rather cheerful and homelike.

“I had been warming myself before the fire for fully an hour—the country lads had grown tired of their rough play and had seated themselves on a rough bench in the corner of the room, where they were nodding and occasionally snoring an intermittent, shrill falsetto accompaniment to the station master’s ruder and less musical bass. I had just discovered that I myself was growing sleepy and was about to seat myself with my back to the wall, yield to the pressure of fatigue and join the sleeping chorus when I was brought back to earth in a very unceremonious fashion.

“ ‘Hands up, there!’

“I turned slowly and gazed sleepily in the direction of the voice. The two country youths awoke with a start and sat staring, more stupidly than I if possible, in the same direction.

“ ‘Hands up, there, and be d—d quick about it!’

“I began to comprehend, and my hands, impelled by a will which for the time being was more masterly than my own, raised themselves, almost automatically, straight up in the air in the most orthodox fashion known to the annals of highway robbery. The country boys rose slowly to their feet and mechanically followed suit.

“The sleep-fog and the psychic confusion of surprise gradually cleared away, and I saw the tableau clearly—so clearly that, ‘an’ I should live a thousand years I’d not forget it’.

“Standing in the open door of the little station were two tough looking men. The taller of the two, the owner of the voice that had so unmusically and ruthlessly aroused us, was a man considerably over six feet in height, raw-boned, broad-shouldered, big-hatted, and roughly dressed, with a coarse red beard that evidently was much the worse for wear in regions where barbers are a scarce commodity. His eyes were of that cold steely grey color which makes one think twice before running counter to the wishes of the man to whom they belong.

“The ruffian held in either hand a cow boy’s

pet, a long barreled Colt's 45—the kind our fathers loved; the kind that has made American history, and especially the 'bad men' who adorn its pages.

"Say, old man, did you ever have a healthy, well favored, full stomached Colt's 45 pointed at you in real earnest? Well, if you haven't you can't appreciate how I felt. I didn't have to see that the hammers of those particular guns were raised to the proper angle and ready for business; it was also entirely unnecessary to waste any valuable time in speculating as to whether they were loaded or not. I actually *felt* that those guns were at full cock and loaded to the muzzle—'chock a block'. The muzzles of the weapons were more capacious than I had believed it possible for pistols to be, and deep down in each of their yawning throats I fancied I could see a huge conical ball, ready for flight in my direction. It was as though I were tied hand and foot and laid upon the track at the mouth of a railroad tunnel from which an express train was thundering down upon me at the rate of a mile a minute.

"Not knowing anything of the desperado's power of self-control my own self-possession was hard to maintain—I imagined that his fingers

were a little trembly, as though he were tempted to pull the trigger and have done with it, but was struggling with himself in the effort to restrain the savage impulse. I mentally resolved that I would neither do nor say anything which should disturb his poise or ruffle his equanimity.

"Ugh! I could actually hear the rush of the displaced air and impelling gases as the bullets started from their hiding places in the breeches of those mighty pistols and, swifter than lightning, flew toward me. I even fancied I could feel the impact of the cruel missiles with my flesh, and the moist warmth of the escaping blood as they rent my skin and muscles.

"Our hands being elevated to an angle which was satisfactory to the spokesman of the bandits, he turned to his companion and said:

" 'Go through 'em, Bob, and hustle it up. The train'll be here before we can say Jack Robinson. Take that feller with the whiskers an' spectacles first. Easy, now, gents; take your medicine, and don't you bat an eye—if you don't want a hole plugged through ye big enough for a cat to crawl into without bloodyin' her whiskers.'

"The fellow who was officiating as lieutenant for the gentleman with the artillery was a

tough-looking proposition for his inches, but such a little runt that even the moral suasion of the 45's did not blunt the edge of my humiliation when he proceeded to 'go through' me.

"But the ignominy and shame of my embarrassing position had not yet reached the climax. I was raging inwardly and wishing that I could have a fair field and no favor with either or both of the bandits—I used to be pretty handy myself, you know—but I did not lose my self-control during the dextrous and speedy search of my person. A pair of walloping big guns is a great inhibitor of the warlike spirit.

"I had not collected my fee in the gunshot case, hence the process of 'going through' me was not very productive of spoils. My pockets were as empty of cash as those of a lamb after a busy day on 'Change. A Waterbury watch, about two dollars in small change, a not very elaborate set of surgical instruments, a jack-knife, a bunch of keys, my wife's photograph, and an annual pass on the St. Paul road constituted my available assets.

The robber was simply furious when he took account of stock. Dashing the stuff upon the floor he ripped out:

“ ‘D—n you for a no account cuss, anyhow! I’ll just give you one for luck.’

“With this the ruffian suddenly caught me by the shoulders and, wheeling me to the right about, kicked me full upon the pride center! What little weight the fellow had was in that kick and I recollect that the hurt to my anatomy and the still greater injury to my self-respect was not unmingled with surprise. I never before knew how hard such a little chap could kick. It was like a blow from a hydraulic ram. It jarred me so that a plate with several false upper teeth was dislodged from my mouth, and fell upon the floor.

“The kick the bandit had given me was alone sufficient to impel me to do murder—my breed does not placidly submit to blows—but the betrayal of a secret which I had guarded carefully, even from my wife, was the last straw in my burden of humiliation. I could take a bite of crow, but I could not bolt him, beak, claws, feathers and all. So enraged was I that I completely forgot the man behind the guns.

“In the rear of the stove was a shelf upon which stood numerous things essential to even a bachelor’s housekeeping. Among these various properties a brace of old fashioned flat

irons caught my eye. I rushed to the shelf, grabbed an iron and hurled it at my enemy's head, just missing him by a hair's breadth.

"Whether because he was taken by surprise or not, I do not know, but the bandit made no attempt to draw a weapon. He stood with mouth agape, stupidly gazing at me until, having missed my aim with the iron, I rushed at him like an infuriated bull; he then aroused himself to the emergency and clinched for safety, and we went to the floor together, the highwayman underneath. As I went down I caught a glimpse of the station agent with a six shooter in his hand, peering cautiously out between the curtains of the partition behind which he had been sleeping, apparently seeking an opportunity for a pot shot.

"With the downfall of the nearer robber the country boys regained their power of motion—and alas! forgot those awful guns and rushed awkwardly to my assistance.

The desperado with the guns came into action simultaneously with the farmer lads. There were two shots, so close together that there seemed to be but one report! The two unfortunate youths fell dead across us two who were struggling upon the floor, their blood spout-

ing over me in hot gushes. They fell with their full weight crushing me, so inertly that I was compelled to heave them off with my shoulders and elbows.

"The murder of those poor boys brought me to my senses, and then came an acute realization of the imminence of my own danger—I well knew at whom the next shot would be fired. With the realization of my danger my furious anger vanished; I regained my usual presence of mind and my thinking apparatus began to work again.

"Putting in practice a trick well known on the wrestling mat, I threw one arm around the neck of my foe, choking him into absolute helplessness. With the other arm I rolled him over like a trussed Christmas turkey, so that his body was between me and the danger of a salute from the 45's. As I turned him over a shot rang out. The ball narrowly escaped putting an end to the battle. It was a lucky shot for me in more ways than one—it not only missed me, but struck the stove, ricocheted and smashed the hanging-lamp with which the room was dimly lighted. There was now no light save from the open door of the stove.

"The man with the guns, still bent upon

assisting his friend and incidentally exterminating me, at once came to close quarters. Standing over our struggling forms, he endeavored to put a shot where it would do his cause the most good. He shot twice, but fired wide, so great was his fear of hitting his confederate.

"Never was my mind or muscle more active. I thought of the station master and his six shooter. 'My God! Will he never fire?' I exclaimed mentally. Meanwhile I twisted my helpless foe about like a bundle of rags. From side to side I rolled him—always with a view to keeping his body between me and danger. Suddenly there was a blinding flash, fairly in my face—and then came oblivion!

"How long I lay insensible I have no means of knowing. When I recovered consciousness I found myself lying where I had fallen when I went to the floor with the highwayman. Beside me, so near that I could touch them with my hand, lay the dead bodies of my late companions. I could just discern their rigid outlines in the dim light from the stove.

"As my senses grew more acute I became aware of an intense burning pain in the left side of my head, and felt a stream of warm fluid which I at once recognized as blood, trickling

freely down my face. I touched the painful spot with my fingers, and knew at once what had happened—I had been shot through the temple! The serious nature of the injury would have suggested itself to the merest tyro. You may imagine how I felt, knowing as you do the extensive experience I had had with gunshot wounds. There did not seem to be one chance in a hundred that the ball had failed to penetrate my brain. Realizing this, I was only too well aware of the probably desperate character of my wound.

“I tried to rise, and after several painful efforts succeeded in raising myself on my elbow, only immediately to fall helplessly back to the floor again. As I lay there half dazed, and fearfully exhausted from the shock and loss of blood, I realized in a hazy sort of way that there was nothing to do but await the coming of assistance.

“I recalled in a confused fashion the vision of the station master and his gun, and wondered what had become of him and why he had not fired at the bandits during the fight. That he had fled from the scene of battle did not occur to me. It subsequently transpired, however, that the gallant fellow was too frightened to

fire at the desperadoes and that, after several attempts to muster up courage enough to pull the trigger on them, he had dropped his weapon and fled incontinently through a rear window.

"I finally became apathetic and indifferent as to my fate—an experience by no means unusual to persons who have suffered from shock and great loss of blood—and lapsed into almost complete unconsciousness.

"How long I lay there upon the floor in my half dead condition is a matter for conjecture. I was finally aroused to full consciousness by the sound of voices and the noise of many feet at the door of the station. I heard some one say:

" 'I don't think they both got away, boys. I only seen one feller run. Perhaps one o' them men they was holdin' up got one of 'em; there was a hull lot o' shootin' goin' on.'

" 'We'd better go kind o' careful, then,' said another. 'If there's any of 'em in there, they may have just one kick left in 'em.'

"In my confused state of mind the significance of what I heard was entirely lost upon me. I knew only that help was at hand and felt that I must get to it.

"Struggling to my feet by a mighty effort I

tottered to the door through which the feeble rays of a lantern in the hands of one of the crowd were gleaming. Reaching the door, I stumbled over the threshold and fairly fell into the arms of several men who were apparently too startled to follow the example of the rest of the crowd, which had scattered the instant my form appeared in the doorway.

"I was immediately thrown to the ground and pinned there by a big strapping fellow, who in his excitement very nearly finished the bandit's work by squeezing what little breath I had remaining completely out of me.

" 'I've got him, boys!' cried the man, who I afterward learned was the station master. The crowd recovered its nerve, returned to action and proceeded to inspect the capture, apparently losing all interest in further investigation of conditions inside the station.

"In the crowd were several women, who, with the curiosity and enterprise characteristic of the "weaker" sex in mobs, succeeded in pushing themselves in front of the men. As the man with the lantern turned the light full upon me, there was a cry from one of the women.

" 'That's him, that's the big robber! I seen

him through the winder of our house when they passed by. I'd know him anywhere!

"I began to realize that I was in danger and, fully aroused, endeavored to make myself heard. My efforts were futile, however, and I merely received a choking for my pains.

" 'Let's string him up, boys; it'll save the county a lot of expense!' shouted some one.

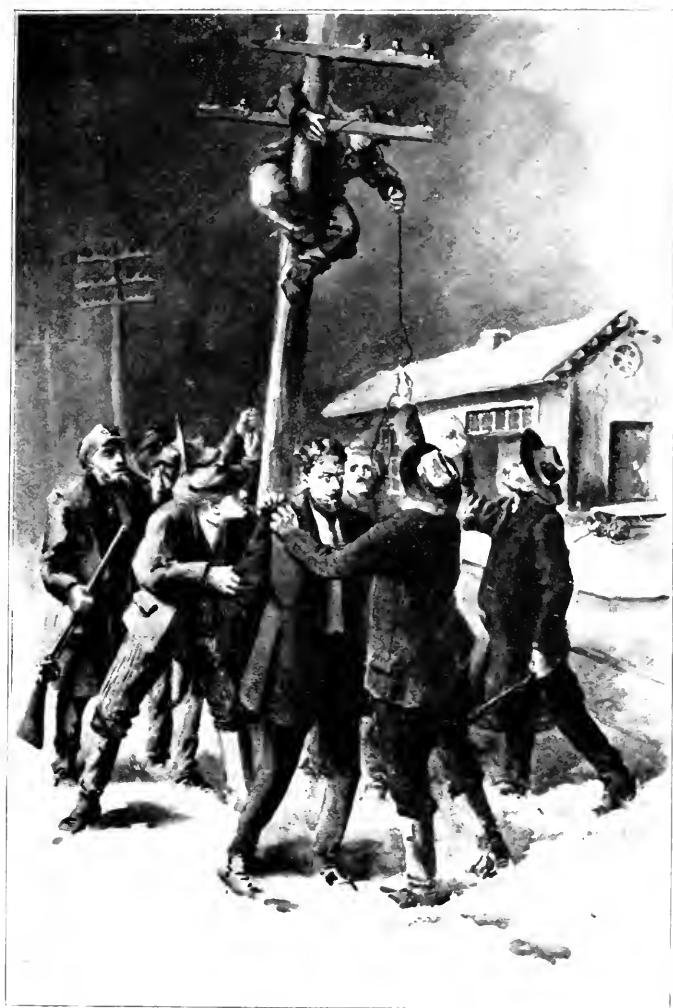
" 'Hang him! Hang him!' chorused the crowd.

" 'Somebody get a rope!' cried the man who was kneeling on my chest.

" 'Take him to a telegraph pole!' cried another.

"I was half dragged, half carried to the nearest telegraph pole and assisted to my feet beneath it. A rope was speedily found and tied about my neck. A boy was ordered to climb the pole with the other end of the rope and pass it over the arm that supports the wires.

"My situation would not have been so bad if I had lost the power of thinking and with it the capacity for mental suffering. My mind was never so acute as at that moment but, with the treatment the bandits had given me and the mauling and choking I had since received at the hands of that ignorant mob, I



"A ROPE WAS SPEEDILY FOUND AND TIED ABOUT MY NECK"



had absolutely lost my power of speech. But think!—My God! man, of what did I not think, as I stood there in the shadow of death at the hands of a lot of ignorant farmers and railroad hands who were about to offer me up on the altar of their own cowardice and brutality? A mob feels but it does not reason. I had seen enough of mobs to know that only a miracle could save me.

“It is a trite observation that in the mind of one standing on the margin of the Valley of Shadows, as I was at that awful moment, all the events of his past life pass in swift review. So rapidly does one impression follow another, that one’s previous experiences form a single composite picture like that of the biograph, or the pictures that dreams paint upon the brain. Such was my own experience in a general way, but one feature of the mental life review which my terrible experience brought me was most peculiar and horrifying.

“For several years before I graduated in medicine, I occupied a position in the coroner’s office in the city of C—. In the performance of my official duties I was compelled to witness a number of executions. Among others was that of a certain wife murderer. The sheriff,

usually expert in such matters, made a bungle of this man's case. The noose slipped and he slowly strangled to death! The unhappy event made a most powerful impression upon my youthful mind, but I little thought of the mental rehearsal of the awful scene that was in store for me.

"Standing out in bold relief from the rest of the picture of my past life that was displayed before my mental vision as the mob completed its preparations for hanging me, was the frightful scene enacted on the gallows at the execution of the wife murderer in the jail yard of C—.

"The most peculiar feature of it all was that it was I, and not that wife murderer whose death throes I saw in my mind's eye. Horrible beyond conception were that awful choking, the agonized struggle for breath, the tumultuous spasms of the diaphragm, the twitchings of the muscles and the frightful roaring in the ears which I experienced as the murderer slowly died of strangulation. As the limbs of the dying man in the mental picture spasmodically flexed and extended themselves, I felt all of the agonizing pains experienced by sufferers from lock jaw or strychnine poisoning.

"And this was not all. My chest was encir-

cled as with a band of iron. Closer and closer drew the band until it seemed as if my diaphragm must tear clear across its breadth in the fearful effort to get oxygen into my lungs. I saw brilliant, glittering points and shafts of light dancing before my eyes. I seemed to be growing delirious and vainly tried to speak, the result being a queer sort of gibberish. Worst of all, the black death hood seemed suddenly to become transformed into a mask of transparent glass, through which I could see my own purpling, swollen features, with the bulging, blackened lips and protruding tongue and turgid, popping eye balls, in which I could see the horror of impending death reflected. Oh, it was horrible! horrible!

“As the struggling body in the picture swayed back and forth from the initial tipping movement imparted by the falling of the drop, my real body seemed to oscillate back and forth like a pendulum. Once, when the picture body struck with cruel impact a corner post of the gallows tree, an acute, agonizing pain shot through me from head to foot. Then the swaying movement ceased and the body spun round and round like a top at the end of the fatal cord, so rapidly that the fuzzy threads

of the hemp stood out like a coating of fur upon the rope. I grew dizzy and nauseated. Dizzier and dizzier I grew; louder and yet louder grew the roaring in my ears, until I became unconscious and—all was over.

“Then came the most incomprehensible thing of all. I recovered consciousness and saw crowding around the dead body upon the scaffold the lookers on at the execution, and the coroner’s jury, with myself at its head. Standing beside the corpse was Dr. Cartwright, the coroner’s physician. Watch in hand, with his fingers on the wrist of the corpse seeking for signs of the life that had forever departed, the doctor slowly counted the minutes required by law.

“And then I saw the body lowered into the coffin and taken away!

“All that I have described to you took place very rapidly. I was not conscious of any appreciable interval between the time of my conveyance from the station by the mob and the final act of the execution which my memory had painted for me.

“While the drama of the hanging was being played in my mind, the preparations for a more

tangible execution under the auspices of Judge Lynch were going on.

"The boy with the rope 'shinned' up the telegraph pole like a young monkey. Arriving at the first cross arm of the pole, he passed the rope over it and threw the loose end down to the expectant crowd of bloodthirsty savages below.

"When the free end of the rope struck the ground, the entire crowd, with the exception of two or three men who were holding me, rushed for it, and fought for holds upon it. Each was more than willing to do his share in the killing of their helpless victim.

"The falling of the rope's end and the mad rush of the crowd to secure it broke the spell in which I was bound and I regained my voice sufficiently to indistinctly mumble my name. A few seconds more and my death by strangulation would have been more than a mental picture—it would have been a grim reality! One of my guards had sufficient sense—or curiosity, I don't know which, nor do I care so long as it served me well—to call a halt in the ceremonies.

" 'Hold on, boys! Wait a minute—let's hear what this feller's tryin' to say. We've got plenty of time to hear his spiel.'

"Most of the crowd came reluctantly back to listen. The more ravenously bloodthirsty of the mob still held on to the rope and waited impatiently for the continuation of the pleasure party. As the brutes crowded around me I managed to introduce myself a little more coherently.

" 'Go on, what yer givin' us?' said the man who had halted the execution; 'He says he's a doctor, boys'.

" 'Here, let's have a look at that feller,' cried a voice from somewhere in the crowd. A man pressed forward and confronted me.

" 'Gimme that lantern.'

"The lantern was handed to him, and holding it close to my face he looked at me earnestly for a moment. I in turn, as you may surmise, stared quite as hard at him. We recognized each other simultaneously!

" 'Dan Williams,' I stammered weakly, recognizing an old patient of mine, a railroad hand whose leg I had saved after it had been condemned to amputation.

" 'Good God! Doc. Fairweather, is that you?'

"I was saved! I shall always believe that the majority of the mob felt aggrieved at both Dan and myself by the mutual recognition that

had saved my life by such a narrow margin. The rope was dropped, however, albeit grudgingly, and my neck released from its gruesome embrace.

"Dan impressed several of his friends into service and I was taken to the nearest house and temporarily cared for as well as possible under my own rather wobbly and uncertain direction, whilst I told my story as best I could in my pitiful condition.

"It was several days before I could be moved, a local physician meanwhile ministering to me with more devotion than surgical skill. You may imagine how happy I was to learn that my head was so hard that it had not been feazed by a 45 calibre conical ball. The bullet had entered my head at the left temple, glancing around the skull, plowing a huge furrow in the scalp and cutting a groove in the outer table of the bone along which it left a trail of lead clear around to the occiput, whence it had been deflected. It was afterward found buried in the wall of the station and sent to me as a souvenir.

"After my return home I was seriously ill for several weeks. I finally, however, returned to my practice, a little the worse for wear, but grateful for my hard-headedness. It was some

time before my brain worked with its usual alertness, but after a few months I had only the scar to remind me of a most awful experience.

“And now for the story of the skull:

“A strong posse was organized for the pursuit of the murderers and they were soon overtaken, after a running fight some miles north of the scene of the awful tragedy in which I had enacted such an important rôle.

“The bandits had entrenched themselves in a deserted farm house, from which they made a desperate fight against their pursuers. Several of the attacking party were killed or wounded. During a lull in the fighting the smaller of the two desperados deserted his comrade, escaped from the house, and ran for the timber. A clever chap who had secreted himself in the woods at the rear of the house in anticipation of some such move on the part of the murderers, received him with a huge charge of buckshot from both barrels of a shot gun fired at close range, killing him instantly.

“I have a picture of the result of the shot, taken as the dead outlaw lay in his coffin. In my leisure moments I comfort myself by gazing upon it. Through the agency of that

photograph the humiliation of the kick the fellow administered to me has faded into the faintest of memories. Indeed, when I do chance to recall that particular incident of the tragedy in which I played so prominent a part, it is with amusement rather than with chagrin.

“The principal of the two outlaws finally exhausted his ammunition. The house was rushed, and after a desperate hand to hand battle, in which, as the sheriff afterwards told me, the desperado ‘made plenty good, and laid out’ several of the attacking party, he was overpowered and manacled.

“The captured bandit proved to be Jack McDougall—*nom de guerre*, ‘Reddy McDug’—a many times murderer, bank robber and all round ‘bad man,’ upon whose head a price had rested for many months.

“McDougall was taken to K—, the county seat, and placed in jail under a strong guard. He was speedily tried, convicted and sentenced to be hanged.

“During the trial, the desperado and I became very well acquainted, and before the date set for the execution I am free to say that I had become sufficiently interested in him to

rather regret the impending cessation of our relations. Indeed, I am not ashamed to confess that I finally conceived a warm regard for the poor devil. Call it a whim if you like, the fact remains that I really did like him.

“Whatever else he may have been, Reddy was not a coward, and if there is any one thing I admire more than another in a man it is gameness. McDougall was a moral imbecile—he considered that he had followed a vocation, and a rather decent one, but he knew the price of the game and was willing to pay it if needs must. He said to me at one of my numerous visits:

“‘You see, Doc, it all depends on how you’re born, and how the cards is stacked. No matter what kind of a game you play, an’ no matter how you play it, settlin’ time is bound to come sooner or later. I’d like to sit in the hold up game a little longer, ’cause I’m still able-bodied, but I dunno as it makes a h—ll of a lot of difference when a feller’s hand is called. Anyhow, what’s the use o’ kickin’? Mine’s been called all right, all right, and there you are.’

“I last saw McDougall the day before his execution. He was still game as a pebble.

His principal concern was to have me witness his end. Said he:

“‘Now, Doc, you an’ me has got to be pretty good pals, even if I did plug you that time tryin’ to help my pardner—which was part of the game anyway. You’re all the friend I’ve got, and I’d like to have you present at the swingin’ party. Just come and watch me cash in, an’ see how nice an’ gentlemanly your friend Reddy ’ll take his medicine. There’ll be nary a kick out o’ me before the bottom drops out of things, an’ nary a kick afterward, if Mr. Sheriff’s onto his job.’

“I saw that McDougall was in earnest, and assured him as I bade him good-bye that I would be on hand for the ceremony. But, all the same, I didn’t mean a word of it. I had had about all the experience with hangings, both as witness and prospective principal, that was necessary to satisfy a man of my modest desires. Why, I had myself actually been mentally hanged and nearly physically hanged simultaneously. Besides, as I have already said, I liked McDougall.

“The execution came off according to schedule, and I was greatly consoled by the report

that the sheriff, was, as McDougall expressed it, decidedly 'on to his job.' Indeed, I was told that the hanging was as smooth a piece of work as had ever occurred in Minnesota. So smooth was it, and so agreeable to the sentiments of the population of that section of the State, that the re-election of Sheriff Jackson was a foregone conclusion. All of which shows that the artist in his particular line is not without appreciation, and that the executioner, unlike the prophet, getteth honor in his own country.

"There were no friends to claim the body of the dead outlaw, and it finally found its way to the M— Medical College. The demonstrator of anatomy, who chanced to be a warm friend of mine, knew the circumstances under which I had become acquainted with the late Mr. McDougall, and reasoning that I would be very glad to receive a souvenir commemorative of the strenuous introduction to that distinguished gentleman which I had received, dissected the head with especial care, and after thorough preparation and skillful bleaching sent the gruesome object to me with his compliments. Since the reception of the skull my lamented friend in material bone and ethe-

real spirit has been the presiding genius of my den—a friend in whom I have full confidence, because I can trust him, and an enemy whom I no longer dread, because I have him where all of our enemies should be placed—in a collection of curios. Rather a nice skull, isn't it?"

A WISE CHILD

I was enjoying my after dinner cigar, and thinking, with some amusement, of a remark my little daughter had made. During the afternoon she had been taken by a party of my friends to a museum—a great treat for her, as she is of an inquiring turn of mind. Among the curiosities and freaks on exhibition, was a poor fellow who was afflicted with some nervous affection that impelled him to keep constantly in motion. The child was especially impressed with the fact that the man was unable to sit down. The grown-up folks of the party were greatly puzzled by the curious phenomenon—not so my hopeful. Looking at him carefully and with an expression of most profound pity for a few moments, she exclaimed, “Poor man! What an awful lot of spankings he must have had when he was a little boy!”

“Well,” I thought, “children are keen observers after all. It might be interesting to read the thoughts of some of them. Now, there’s that Smith baby for example—what a wise



"A WISE CHILD"

expression it has, to be sure! Really, that child ought to be called Solomon. I would suggest the name to *pater familias*, only he might get frightened at the mere suggestion of such wisdom on the part of his offspring."

As a matter of fact, the Smith child is the most remarkable specimen of a young one I have ever seen. He is now some three years of age, yet has never made the slightest attempt to talk. As for walking, I question whether the child will ever be able to use his limbs very successfully. They are malformed and very imperfectly developed. But the child's head has gone to the other extreme; while by no means symmetrical in outline, it is preternaturally large, with bulging frontal eminences and immense parietal protuberances. The eyes are brilliant, deep set, and reflect an expression of wise gravity that is positively eerie. The brow is wrinkled in strongly marked furrows and the general aspect of the face is somewhat shrivelled and prematurely old. Around the angles of the mouth are converging, plainly accentuated lines that give the face an expression of sternness. There is no color in the skin save about the eyelids, which are habitually red and tumefied. The dead, clayey whiteness

of the child's complexion is occasionally relieved by dark, blotchy eruptions, that make the unhealthy pallor of the skin still more noticeable.

The most striking peculiarity of the Smith baby is its prematurely aged look, suggesting the grotesque combination of the face of a sickly old man with the body of a child. At first sight, the effect is somewhat startling.

And yet, despite its physical defects, the child grows on. Knowing how utterly defenseless the poor little thing was against the circumstances which made it a caricature of healthy babyhood, and realizing its abject helplessness in the battle of life, I sincerely pity it.

Is it not strange that mothers lavish so much affection upon such children as the Smith baby? No matter how many beautiful children she may have, the heart of the mother goes out to the least favored of her offspring in a wealth of love that is the only excuse the unfortunate child has for living. Mothers care naught for the law of the survival of the fittest—not they. Should such a child die, the poor mother mourns it as the one ewe lamb of her little flock.

With the father it is different, somehow—perhaps not in all cases, but I know it is different with the father in this instance.

Smith is a queer sort of fellow—rather reticent in manner it seems to me. However, he is a new patron of mine and perhaps I do not quite understand him. I was first called in to see the baby, and haven't had very much opportunity to converse with the father. At the present rate of progress, I am not likely to get much better acquainted, for, come to think of it, he seems somewhat inclined to avoid me.

But Smith's friends say that he is a thoroughly good fellow; indeed, that he is "one of the boys."

Once in a while, Smith seems to be more than ordinarily anxious about the baby—apparently through pride rather than affection, for the little one really seems to be the bane of his existence. He did unbend once, enough to ask me if there wasn't some way to cure the child's snuffles and keep "those d—d blotches" off its face, but I am sure he was thinking more of the comments of his neighbors than of the child's comfort.

I don't believe that Smith cares a straw about his young one's digestion, yet he swore like a pirate when he saw the irregular manner in which its second teeth were coming in. Not that I blame him much for swearing, for those teeth do look more like those of a saw than such

as a baby of good breeding is expected to develop. Still, the child is not to blame for his bad teeth. Smith knows that, if he knows anything.

I suppose I ought not to say it, but I honestly believe that Smith would far rather his child would die than live. The poor little thing had a bad attack of cholera infantum a while ago, and narrowly missed going to the land where babies' stomachs are at rest and pimples are unknown. It is a dreadful thing to say, but I really suspect that Smith was—well, not exactly pleased with the results of my treatment. He made a remark the other day that was suggestive, to say the least. He said there were too many new-fangled ideas in the treatment of children's diseases to suit him. "Toxins," said he, "were invented, I suppose, to cover up medical ignorance."

I did not reply, for, as I have already remarked, Smith and I have not become very friendly as yet.

But the Smith baby is a very interesting study, and I can tolerate its father's peculiar ways for the child's sake, and for the interest the case affords me.

I lolled back in my favorite chair puffing the fragrant smoke in fantastic rings, carelessly aimed at the chandelier overhead, and revolving the case of the Smith baby in my mind. I do not know how long I sat there musing, but I finally fell into that half dreamy state which, with me, is a positive sign of an impending nap. Even my cigar was becoming sleepy and had begun to smolder. Being in no mood to tolerate interruption, I fear it was with some irritation that I shouted, in response to a timid rap at the door:

“Come in!”

The door opened, and in walked—Smith’s baby!

To say that I was astonished would be quite conventional, but measurably untrue, for—I was paralyzed. I think my visitor must have noticed the effect his unexpected entrance had upon me, for, after a deferential bow and a polite “Good evening,” he calmly awaited my pleasure. There was a quizzical expression in his eyes, and a pitying smile animated his curiously wrinkled face as I finally stammered:

“W—why, g—good evening, sir. This is quite—quite, ah—unexpected, you know.”

“And also unconventional, I presume,” said

my caller. "It is not *en regle*, I believe, for people who are helpless to call upon the doctor. He is supposed to do all the calling himself. Patients who have sound legs and strength enough to walk are the only sort who are expected to visit their medical adviser. We will not consider those 'has beens,' who are sometimes so grateful to the doctor for helping them out of the world that they call upon him afterward o' nights," and the baby smiled sarcastically.

I do not believe in ghosts, yet I must confess that I blushed hotly at the implied unfair criticism of my noble profession.

My young friend noticed my confusion and said:

"Pardon me, I did not mean to be personal. There are doctors and doctors you know—and also spooks and things."

"Great Hippocrates!" I exclaimed, springing to my feet in sudden, amazed recollection. "I thought you could neither walk nor talk, and you have not only come to see me but are talking as fluently as any one could."

"Oh, well," replied my visitor, "things are not always what they seem—even to doctors. I have not walked much as yet, it is true, but

I thought it best not to do so. My limbs have never looked very promising, and consequently nothing has ever been expected of them. It is much easier to ride or be carried about than to walk—even with good legs—so I let the sympathy of the people about me have full sway.

“As for speaking, pray tell me what inducement there is to conversation in my case. I am not fond of hearing myself talk—not at all, and there’s no use talking to the people around me. They could not understand me and there are no subjects of mutual interest. Besides, if I should display my linguistic skill, my folks would be a little shy of me. They are very confidential, you know, and on account of my apparent inability to repeat what I hear, I get in on many a nice bit of grown-up gossip.”

“Well,” I said, “there does seem to be some advantage in concealing your power of speech, but I don’t quite comprehend your statement that the people about you would not understand you. Your language certainly seems clear enough for ordinary understanding.”

“Oh, well, you see I have thus far been talking in a quite commonplace fashion. We have exchanged hardly more than mere conversational greetings. With most persons the con-

versation would of necessity begin and end with mere perfunctory remarks, and that wouldn't be worth while. You, however, being a doctor, and consequently a man of learning, are capable of appreciating me at my true value. I have long experienced a desire to converse with you, and to-night I resolved to call upon you here at your own home, where we can have a little chat without danger of interruption."

"Yes," I said, smiling at his assurance, "but how on earth have you acquired the information necessary to carry on an intelligent conversation with a scientific physician? You are only about three years of age, and if you are as intellectual as you claim to be, your precocity is certainly marvelous."

My little friend smiled blandly, and replied: "That word, precocity, is a very offensive one, but I excuse you for using it, because it is evident that you do not know the true explanation of the advanced intellect of the so-called precocious child. Do you know anything of Buddhism, doctor?"

"Well, yes, something."

"Then you will understand me when I say that 'precocity' is merely the development in the child of a portion of the wisdom acquired

during its previous terrestrial existences. As you are aware, the modern school of theosophists has appropriated this theory of the Buddhists."

"Very true," I replied, with some amusement, "but that does not add to the validity of the theory."

"It is evident that you are not a theosophist, doctor. I assure you, however, that the Buddhists are right. I know they are right, for I have myself been on earth twice before. You have doubtless often noted that I am not as other children."

"True, you have always seemed much older than your years," I replied.

"Then you are prepared to believe me when I assert that what you have regarded as an appearance of premature age, is merely a reflection of my past lives showing through the childlike envelopment of the present."

"Ah!" I exclaimed, "there is certainly food for reflection in what you say. I confess, however, that the idea had never suggested itself to me. I shall certainly make a note of it."

My visitor seemed gratified at having imparted such interesting and valuable information.

"And now, doctor, I am sure you will not consider me egotistic if I claim to be, what my appearance would indicate—a 'wise child'."

"Oh, ho! Are you the original 'wise child' who knew his own father?" I asked, jocularly.

My young friend seemed to take me seriously, and replied, "Pshaw! doctor; I am surprised that you even remember that absurd theory. There's nothing in it, and besides, it's a very crude test of intellectuality. Why shouldn't any child who is not an idiot, know its own father? Why, I was introduced to mine immediately on my arrival in your inhospitable clime. I remember the introduction more particularly, because, not knowing what sort of people I was to fall in with, I was quite afraid I might be asked to step over and sit with the girls—a fate too horrible to think of!

"Now, doctor, I suppose you are wondering what I am going to find to talk about. I have already informed you that platitudes and conventional commonplaces are very fatiguing to me. I assure you, however, that it is not my intention to go to the other extreme and talk abstract science."

"Great Scott!" I exclaimed, "Do you mean to say that you have had a scientific training?"

"Oh, my, yes!" replied young Smith, drawing himself up—rather proudly it seemed to me. "But," he continued, "I am not going to enter into the scientific heavies. I shall deal largely in generalities, and such science as may appear in my remarks will be of a rather superficial sort."

"Since knowing you, doctor, I have become quite reconciled to the death of your predecessor in our family—dear old Dr. Whittemore. He was a kind, considerate old man, and as tender-hearted as a woman, despite his rough ways. But I didn't like him at first. You see I didn't understand him very well. He had such a habit of swearing to himself whenever he looked at these crooked legs of mine. But he was my friend, nevertheless, and several times when old Smith was—"

"I beg pardon," I said, "but did you say, old Smith?"

"Why, yes," replied my visitor, raising his eyebrows as though surprised at the interruption, "old Smith—the governor, you know."

"Oh, I see, you mean your father," I replied.

"Of course I meant my father!" exclaimed the youngster impatiently.

"Well, as I was saying, continued the child,

several times when old Smith was especially cross with me and the doctor happened to be present, the old fellow took my part and told the governor he ought to be ashamed of himself.

"Smith once pointed at me and said, 'Great God! man, look at that head and those legs! How can you blame me for being disgusted because the little beast lived?'

" 'Now, see here, Smith,' exclaimed the doctor, 'that young-one, so far as I am aware, is in no wise responsible for the contour of his legs or the bulginess of his cranium. You and I have a theory regarding the cause of the baby's peculiarities, which lays the responsibility at the door of one—'

" 'Sh!—' said pa, 'there is no necessity of your being personal, and besides, my mother-in-law is in the next room, and it is really foolish to call her in counsel. She is troublesome enough now. She looks suspiciously wise at times.'

" 'Well, then,' said the doctor, 'don't talk so like a d—d fool!'

" 'Oh, there's no use roasting me, doctor, I am patient enough under the circumstances. I sometimes think that if the medical profession did its full duty, such children would not—'

" 'Would not live to a ripe old age, eh, Smith?'

interrupted the doctor, angrily. 'Well, sir, the profession of medicine is sometimes compelled to save people from the consequences of their crimes—it does not, however, feel in duty bound to commit crimes for them. I trust the ethical distinction between the duty of the profession and the dirty work some persons would have it do for them, is clear to your somewhat biased intellect, my good sir!'

"My! but old Smith was mad—madder than a hornet! But the doctor seemed to have the better of the argument, and the governor soon cleared out, grumbling to himself and swearing at the cat that got in his way and had his tail stepped on."

"The old doctor certainly was your friend, and I am not very favorably impressed by your description of your father. I might say in passing, however, that your lack of filial respect is a by no means commendable trait in your character. No matter what his peculiarities may be, you must remember that Smith *is* your father and as such demands respect. Have you forgotten what the Bible says, 'Honor thy father and thy mother?' "

My young friend looked extremely disgusted, and replied:

"Dear me, doctor!—can't you get along without quoting such old, wormy, out-of-date authorities as the Bible? That advice was all well enough in its day, but honoring one's parents in the collective sense is played out in these modern times. Mothers are just as much deserving of honor as ever—and that's a great deal, but fathers—humph! The fellow who wrote that particular portion of the scriptures didn't know Smith, you can just bet your bottom dollar on that. If I was as big a fool as he thinks I am, I might honor and respect him, but I know a thing or two.

"Honor Smith? Ye gods! Look at the protuberances of my cranium! Gaze upon these misshapen legs of mine! You told my mother I had 'rickets,' didn't you?"

"Ye—yes, I believe I did."

"Well, I don't blame you for your ignorance, doctor. You have not been in practice long enough to lose faith in human nature. Now, old Dr. Whittemore knew better, and so does Smith."

"But, my dear boy" I interposed, "I think I know rachitis when I see it."

"So, rachitis is the scientific appellation, eh? Well, in the language of the street, 'rachitis noth-

ing!" Can't you see through a millstone with a hole in it? Doctor, my so-called rickets is nothing more nor less than—"

"Hush! for the Lord's sake, hush!" I cried, putting my hand over young Smith's mouth, as a horrible suspicion suddenly flashed upon me. "Be careful, my young friend, even the walls of a doctor's study may have ears. Can it be possible that I have been mistaken and that—"

"Precisely so, sir," interrupted my visitor sarcastically. "You are really growing quite intelligent. If you keep on, doctor, you will be as good an intuitive diagnostician as we have in Chicago, and that's saying much."

"Yes," I replied with some confusion, "but you can't expect a fellow to carry a divining rod about with him, and besides, your family is one of the highest respectability."

My young visitor sneered perceptibly and retorted:

"Of course, you are like the rest of humanity, looking for respectability in high places and overlooking the pearls that lie imbedded in the mud of poverty and social mediocrity. I really feel inclined to lecture you, doctor, you seem so woe-fully stupid in some directions. Here you are, with abundant opportunities for study and ob-

servation of human nature, maundering of 'respectability' as a factor in diagnosis! Not but that it is a factor sometimes, but you don't weigh the evidence just right. You are inclined to misconstrue social prominence as a factor in your diagnoses. Your interpretation of it is only too often precisely opposite to the truth.

"Look at the childlessness of the average high-toned family—look at the character of the progeny of those who do have children, and then babble of 'respectability!' Faugh! doctor, you make me sick. For a scientific physician, you are the most innocent man I ever knew."

"Oh, come now," I said, "I don't pretend to know it all, but I am not quite so big a fool as you might suppose."

"Well, perhaps not—quite. There may be bigger chumps, but I dare say they are all practicing medicine."

"By the way," he continued, "speaking of honoring one's father, I can't for the life of me see why a fellow should be expected to do that. Fathers are mere accidents in the scheme of nature. You see, anybody will answer for a father, but with your mother—well, that's different. No other could fill her place. Most people think the male human is the important element in our

social system, but that's all rot. He is a secondary consideration, a mere incident, and should be given to understand it."

"Um-m ah!" I answered slowly, "I believe the truth is gradually dawning upon him. The new woman is—"

"Great guns, doctor! Do you mean those things with breeches on, that ride bicycles, and play foot ball?"

"Well, in a measure, yes," I replied.

"Come, come, doctor! I was talking about natural phenomena as involved in the perpetuation of the species; I had no thought of what biologists term sports in nature."

"Ah, that's different, my boy," I said, "unless you use the term 'sport' as a *double entendre*."

"I don't think I quite understand you, doctor."

"Oh well, I suppose my play upon words was a little too commonplace for you," I replied, meanwhile thinking that the Smith baby was something of a chump himself. Not wishing to hurt his feelings, however, I held my peace, and he continued:

"Do you know, doctor, I think that if a child is expected to honor its father, it should

have some voice in his selection. Now, for example," and the poor little chap felt of his bumps and gazed mournfully at his crippled limbs, "I should not have been as I am, had I been permitted to select my father. Of course I might have made a mistake, anyway, but you can be assured that I should never have selected Smith."

"Well, Smith might not have been such a bad father if—"

"Oh, I know what you are going to say, doctor, but no amount of preparatory treatment would ever have made Smith anything but a mean old cuss, anyhow."

"Perhaps you are right," I answered, "and, come to think of it, as your family is a comparatively new one to me, I believe I'll insist on monthly settlements of my bills."

"Well, you know your own business better than I do, but I know Smith pretty well, and I don't think it will do any harm,—unless he gets mad and changes doctors. I hope he won't do that, for I am beginning to like you pretty well, and I dread a change. There's no telling what these highly 'respectable' people will do, you know, and now that you are beginning to understand my case a little, a change

of doctors might be disastrous. You see, I can't talk to everybody as freely as I feel that I can to you."

"Then I guess I won't send in any bill, it would be too bad to neglect you, just because your father is—"

"A brute, eh, doctor?"

"N-no, I shouldn't like to say that," I replied.

"Because of his eminent respectability, I presume," said my visitor, grinning sarcastically.

I was discreetly silent.

"Well," continued the young wiseacre, "I don't suppose that you and I alone could settle a certain phase of the social problem, even if we were foolish enough to try, but there are some very interesting points that might be discussed upon the question of that veneering of 'respectability' for which you seem to have such great reverence. I should like to discuss them with you, did time permit. I assure you that I have given the subject much conscientious study and deep thought.

"There is one point, doctor, in which you physicians are very remiss, and which, for the sake of suffering childhood, I cannot allow

to pass unnoticed. I refer to the indiscriminate fashion in which people are allowed to marry, and rear children. Why, when I look about me and see the number of infantile wrecks, who, like myself, are victims of your pernicious social system, I am disgusted. If the principals in matrimonial mistakes were the only ones to suffer, it would be different, but it's the babies that get the worst of it. And you medical blockheads look on and say nothing. You are too stupid to see anything, perhaps, and therefore have nothing to say."

"Well, my boy, you have the making of a social reformer in you. I don't know that I ever gave the subject much thought. I have been too busy with—"

"Too busy trying to cure results to inquire into causes, eh, doctor?"

"Why, I—that is, not exactly," I stammered, "you know, my boy, that—"

"Oh, yes, I understand, old fellow, you are not quite blind to such things, but you don't propose either to pose as a Hercules cleaning out the Augean stables, or expose yourself to the same sort of ridicule as did Don Quixote when he challenged the wind-mills. Shame on

you, doctor! Be a good Philistine and snap your fingers at conventionalities!"

"See here, my young friend, I am practicing medicine for a livelihood, and I can't afford to be radical in my views. It's all well enough to scarify society, if you don't depend upon it for bread and butter—but in my case it's different, and I must be careful."

Young Smith shrugged his shoulders somewhat contemptuously, and replied:

"What a queer world! You fellows work like a dog in a treadmill all your lives, trying to make enough hay while the sun is shining, to enable you to take some comfort by and by. When the 'by and by' comes, you have lost the capacity for enjoyment. You slave from morning till night, to acquire a competency—and the brains—that will enable you to be independent in thought and action. Then, when the wished-for time does come, you—well, you roll over like a fish and die. Always going to have a good time—some day; always going to be a Philistine—some day; always looking ahead into that undiscovered country where lies—the grave. Your ambition ends in six feet of earth. Pshaw! how you

people irritate me! Why not learn to labor and to loaf?"

My visitor's words impressed me more than I would have been willing to acknowledge.

"Heigho!" I exclaimed, "I don't know but you are right, my boy, and yet, I don't exactly see how I can help matters much."

"There's one thing you can do, doctor, you can at least make the effort to impress upon the public the necessity of treating human beings with the same degree of intelligence and consideration that you bestow upon animals. Get rid of that idiotic, sentimental moonshine about 'joining two souls in wedlock' and come down to the common-sense basis of a union for a specific, organic purpose between two bipeds, that are or should be, subject to the same laws as other animals. Do this and there will be fewer hideous heads and miserable legs like mine."

My little friend wept silently.

"Come, come, my lad, cheer up," I said, "You must remember that the ranks of the immortal geniuses of the world have been largely recruited from such material as yourself."

"You doubtless mean to be consoling, my

dear sir," replied the child, "but you forget the chief consolation contained in your argument."

"Pray, what is that?" I asked.

"Why those degenerate geniuses die young, and leave no posterity to perpetuate their misery."

"You are right," I said, musingly. "I did not think of that."

"Do you know, doctor, that the most philosophic *bon mot* ever perpetrated, and the one which seems most appropriate to my case, is that facetious description which somebody gave of the mule. He said, if I remember correctly, that the mule was an animal which had no 'pride of paternity and no hope of posterity'."

"And yet," I replied, the mule is not the happiest and most placid animal in the world. The clam is his superior in many respects."

"Yes, and there are many human clams. I fancy, however, that you do not envy them, doctor."

"Well, I am not so sure about that, my dear young friend. The higher emotions and more refined sensibilities are the foundation of most of the sorrows of life."

"But what of the pleasures, doctor?"

"True, I had forgotten them," I replied.

We sat for some time, young Smith and I, silently gazing into the fireplace. My cigar having gone out, I relighted it and began puffing vigorously, with the result of blowing some dense clouds of smoke in the direction of my visitor. A sharp cough, followed by a decided sputter, reminded me of my unintentional discourtesy.

"Pardon me, my boy, but I forgot that you are not used to tobacco."

The wise child smiled, and with a humorous twinkle in his bright eyes replied:

"Well, doctor, you haven't given me much opportunity to become inured to it this evening—save by proxy, and there are some things that cannot be done by proxy with any degree of satisfaction."

"Good heavens, boy! You don't mean to say that you smoke?"

"Don't I, though? Just try me and see."

Amazed though I was, I politely extended my cigar case. With the air of a *connoisseur*, my visitor selected one, bit off the end, and, taking my proffered match, lighted the weed

and began smoking, with all the *sang froid* of an old timer.

"By Jove! doctor, you don't smoke drug-store cigars, I see."

"N—no," I said, "I get the best there is in the market," meanwhile mentally apologizing to my friend K—, the pharmacist who had given me the box from which that very cigar was taken.

"Do you know, doctor, I haven't enjoyed a smoke for ages. I used to 'hit the pipe,' as you now express it, when I was on earth before. But then," he sighed, "opium was opium in those days."

"And pray, what is it nowadays?" I asked.

"Soothing syrup, b'gosh! And I don't like it a little bit, though I've swallowed a barrel of it.

"Which reminds me that you doctors don't know much about colicky babies," said my visitor.

"N—no—I don't suppose we do know a great deal about infantile colic—save by its works—drat it!"

"And its music," said young Smith, chuckling audibly, as a prolonged, painful, quaver-

ing wail was wafted in at the window from a house across the street.

"Come, come, my boy, you mustn't be too hard on us doctors. Besides, that confounded young one over yonder isn't under my care. If he was it might be different. One of my brethren from Dearborn Avenue has charge of him. He doesn't seem to be succeeding very well, either, for the little fiend is yelling night and day. He has kept me awake nights for about three weeks. If I shut down the windows, I smother, and if I open them that vicious little animal disturbs my rest—and there you are!"

"Well, why don't you do something for the poor little chap?"

"Oh, as I told you, he's not my patient. It wouldn't be ethical for me to chip in," I replied. "And besides, I don't think his mother would give him the medicine, even if I should send it over."

"Ah, then you think you could relieve him, eh? I am glad to know there is one doctor who knows how to treat colic. Really, I'm almost sorry I haven't had it since I have been under your care. Tell me, pray, what would you give the child?"

"Four ounces of chloroform," I replied, vindictively.

"The trouble with you doctors nowadays," said the Smith baby, "is that you talk too much about microbes. Do you remember that attack of cholera-infantum I had?"

"Yes—I should rather think I did."

"Well, you talked about toxins, and microbes, until you made me sicker than ever. There I was, drinking hog-wash baby-food out of a dirty old bottle through a nasty rubber tube, and poisoning myself every time I did it, and you talking about germs and such things! Germs be blowed! I was suffering from an overdose of dirt—just plain ordinary dirt. Mother was too busy with her receptions and parties, to attend to me, and that fool nurse neglected me. You told her to scald my bottle, but she never did it. Why, the day before I fell sick, the cat was playing with that infernal tube for a straight two hours."

My visitor was becoming excited. He fairly shrieked—"Microbes, germs, toxins! Dirt, sir, just plain, common, everyday dirt!"

"Well," I said, "some of us doctors are beginning to believe that while there may be a distinc-

tion between dirt and microbes, there's precious little practical difference after all."

"I wonder if the Lord ever intended man to smoke," said the wise child. "He would have made the tobacco plant the tree of knowledge, if he had known as much about nicotine as we do."

"Possibly," I replied, "but there are different opinions on that subject. A radical old minister once said that if the Lord had intended man to smoke, he would have put a chimney in the back of his head."

"Humph! that old fool didn't know much. If he had ever smoked—a—cigar like this—he—would—"

My young friend paused, and put his hand to the pit of his stomach.

"Why, my dear boy, you seem distressed. Really, you are quite pale. Pray, let me get you some—"

"Oh, it's nothing, doctor, I—well, you see, I am not used to—to late hours," said the poor little chap, with a painful effort to smile.

"Perhaps some fresh air might make you feel better," I suggested. "I will raise another window."

"N—no, never mind. I believe I'll just step to the door for a moment, if you don't object. I feel a little—"

I grasped the situation, and hastily escorted my visitor to the veranda.

Appreciating the delicacy of my guest's position, I then discreetly returned to my sanctum and resumed my cigar. Certain peculiar sounds that came through the open door, confirmed my hasty diagnosis.

I waited until the tumultuous heavings of my young friend's diaphragm had ceased, and then went out to ask him to return to the library, but he was nowhere to be seen. The "wise child" had gone!

As I stood there musing, and thinking that nicotine levels all intellectual distinctions between children, a firm hand was laid on my shoulder and a voice said in my ear:

"Doctor, you have been sleeping in your chair about long enough. Go to bed, you silly fellow!"

I was about to follow my wife's advice, when—

"Ting—aling—a—ling!" came a ring at the telephone.

I fear I was not very suave as I answered—

"Hello, hello! What's wanted?"

"Why, the baby's got the colic to beat the very devil, and I wish you'd come down right away."

"Get out!" I howled. "You'll have to get some other doctor. I don't call on strangers at night," adding, *sotto voce*, "nor anybody else, if I can help it."

"Why, doctor, don't you know who this is?"

"No, I'll be hanged if I do. Who the deuce are you, anyhow?"

"Who? Me? Why, doctor, I'm Smith!"

LEAVES FROM A SUICIDE'S DIARY

I was very young when the idea of suicide first suggested itself to me;—my life had its troubles as far back as my memory extends. I have a vivid recollection of taking a certain degree of interest in the subject when I was a mere lad,—long before I first thought of keeping a record of my impressions. My father had whipped me for some trivial matter; so trivial was it, and so severe my punishment, that I was overwhelmed with a sense of the cruel injustice of it all. Father was a stern, cold man, and a man of moods. He could be affectionate at times, and I presume that deep down in his heart he loved me, but, as I have said, he was a man of moods—and they were not always pleasant ones for those around him. It is a curious psychic fact that some men are subject to storms of passion which, concealed through politic motives from all but those most entitled to consideration, seemingly must be vented upon those whom affection should protect. My father was such a man, and I, his eldest

child, was the member of the family who most often suffered from his horrible nerve storms. As I grew older he became more and more inconsiderate in his treatment of me, and more and more severe in his punishments.

I believe that all boys of good breeding and average physical stamina, are conscious at times that paternal punishment is frequently dictated by love and sincere interest in the welfare of the victim. It is this sort of punishment that is followed by a healthy moral and physical reaction. But with punishment undeserved, and out of all proportion to the offense which it is intended to reprove, it is quite different. Once let a boy experience such punishment, and there arises in him a sense of rebellion against parental authority, and his respect and affection for the parent becomes tainted with bitterness that even Time cannot efface.

Once let the iron of vindictive resentment against oppression and injustice enter his soul, and your loving and lovable boy becomes transformed—he ages perceptibly, and his fair young life, his innocent childhood is gone—to return no more. “When I am a man!” he cries, and that part of the river of life which flows between childhood and manhood,—his youth,

—is spanned by a bridge of sighs over which he who crosses can not return. “WHEN I AM A MAN!” Alas! the bitter words are hardly spoken ere the boy is a man—and such a man! A man without memory of happy and tranquil youth—is he not a flower that has bloomed to a semblance of maturity, yet has never been pervaded by that subtle fragrance which only the warm, tender affection of budding youth imparts?

In my case the effect was very peculiar; I was made to feel not only the injustice of my punishment, but a profound sense of humiliation. My pride was wounded more than my physical body—and, God knows, that was wounded severely enough. Ah, thou hadst a heavy hand, oh father mine! Would that I had experienced more of resentment and less of mortification. The former would have been bad enough, but the latter made life a hell on earth for me. I was fragile, nervous, sensitive, and of a physique that ill bore abuse. Sensitive though my physical body was, I had a mental make-up that was even more so. How I brooded over that terrible whipping—the last my father ever gave me, for he died soon after. The world seemed so dark and gloomy to me.

There was no rift in those sombre clouds that gave forth the bitter rain which tintured my young life with gall and wormwood. There was no happiness anywhere.

My mother, angel that she was, and is,—if there be aught of justice or compassion in the hereafter,—tried to stem the torrent of grief that was overwhelming my young life, tried to dispel the poisonous miasm that had disseminated itself throughout every element of my moral and intellectual being, by such love and consolation as only a tender, sympathetic mother can give, but in vain. A constant, oppressive, deeply rooted melancholy took possession of me. I lost my animation and became as near a misanthrope as one of my years and limited experience could possibly be. And the shadow of that storm cloud of emotion has never been quite dissipated in the wearing of the passing years of life's battle. Woe to him the memory of whose youth is enwrapped in a funereal pall and in whose mouth there remains the bitter taste of humiliation, of outraged pride and self-respect.

It was during the period immediately following the castigation I have mentioned, that the notion of self-destruction first crystallized in

my mind. I do not remember just how I reasoned upon the matter; I recall clearly enough, however, that I was profoundly impressed with the idea that my woes were bearing me down to the depths of misery and despair. There rested upon me a dreadful incubus from which there seemed to be but one means of escape.

I had seen persons lying dead, and I remember that in my despairing, hopeless state of mind the thought of the peaceful, quiet expression upon their faces was positively fascinating to me. I found myself dwelling upon it with much interest, and a feeling akin to envy.

Well, as I have said, I do not remember precisely how I formulated my conclusions, but I finally resolved to make away with myself. Unfortunately, however, one of the traits with which I was endowed by nature, was a fear of physical suffering, and when the resolution to take my own life had been formed, I still had to deal with my physical cowardice.

It has been said that only cowards and lunatics commit suicide. There was never a greater lie than this. Lunatics may suicide—cowards, never. It requires true heroism to face an unknown hereafter—to fly from those ills we

have to those we know not of. And the hapless one to whom life is a burden must have courage *par excellence*, to enable him to face that dread future which, if he be scripturally credulous, must needs be more fearful than the terrestrial unhappiness that he fain would escape. No, suicide requires bravery, and I was not brave—I had hardly gotten beyond that dread of darkness and solitude which is the bane of childish existence. What wonder that I dreaded to take so radical a road out of my slough of despond?

The physical penalty of self-destruction was the most important obstacle to be overcome if I would escape from my mental slavery. So great was my dread of it, that—well, I lived, and, more's the pity, am still living, a miserable misanthrope, in whom the misery of the present is exceeded only by his dread of the unknown country, and his physical fears of the means necessary to take him hence.

I wonder if there are many who are entrusted with the care of youth, who ever think of their influence in moulding its future destinies. I have long since forgiven my father for his harshness—but the memory of my youthful sorrows can never be effaced. Does science recognize

such a thing as a mental scar? It should. And mental scars, though unseen, are not only permanent, but ever painful. Death finally claimed my father through his one infirmity. He died of apoplexy, superinduced by one of his attacks of blind, unreasoning passion. I know not where he is, but I trust he is unconscious of the results of his mismanagement of his unfortunate son. I say I know not where he is, advisedly. My views of the hereafter—if I may call the chaotic ideas I have hitherto entertained, views—have undergone considerable modification of late. I am losing my egotism, and gradually coming to believe that death is but another name for oblivion. How prosaic it is, to be sure. By no means so satisfying to the ignorant, and those of the faith—which is sometimes another way of putting the same proposition—as that halo of glory for the good, or that blaze of everlasting fire for the wicked, which theology from time immemorial has prescribed for the dying. And if oblivion be the finality, what more could the All Father do for his tired children?

What would my life have been had I possessed a different temperament? Possibly if I had

been born of other blood, and under more propitious skies, I would have seen the world through different eyes. There might have been more *couleur de rose* and less of sombre tints and neutrals. To be born in the shadows—ah, me! The sun of morning has never gilded my mountain tops, nor even at mid-day penetrated the fog and gloom of the valleys of my soul. Golden sunsets and glorious afterglows are not for me. Twilight alone is, and ever has been mine. Perhaps if I could have loved—'Tis said that love illumines one's soul. But I have never loved. There was once a woman, whom men called beautiful, but I do not remember much of her. She had a skin of blood and milk, golden hair, and pale blue eyes that never looked straight at you. Her voice, as I recall it, was sweet enough, but it did not ring true, and when she laughed—but why do I speak of her? She did not understand, and she is but a dream figure now.

Some one has said that ambition is the mainspring of life. I do not know, yet I have had ambition—of a certain kind. Mine has been to learn, to know, to acquire wisdom that should raise me out of the dead level of mediocrity. But Ambition is the twin sister of Discontent,

and Discontent is the mother of Melancholy and Despair. Work as I might—and I have never been a drone—there has always been some one just ahead of me whose results were so much more commendable than my own that,—well, one might as well work on, even though he never accomplishes anything worth while. Certain it is that the world has been no better for anything I ever did. And still I work. I often wonder if the fellow ahead of me in life's battle does not feel the same way;—there's always another just ahead of him. There can be no satisfaction in work well done when another goal is looming up just beyond the one we have reached. I saw a herd of cattle the other day, lying beneath a spreading oak, placidly chewing their cuds, and as I looked at them I fancied they gazed at me somewhat pityingly. "Ah," I thought, "here is contentment indeed." I really envied them—until I noticed the flies that tormented their glossy hides. One might as well be tormented by ambitions as by flies and gnats. Possibly Nature is jealous of her children, and will permit none of them to experience the joy of mere living unannoyed.

A friend of mine once said to me, "How very

odd, that you should have taken up the science of chemistry and made a recluse of yourself, delving and diving into secrets of nature which, as you have never made any practical use of them, might as well have remained mysteries." Here was another who did not understand—another who, like all the rest of those who called themselves and whom I called my friends, could not sympathize with me in my devotion to study, because there were no flesh pots in sight to serve as a motive for the work. To such sordid ones I could not well lay bare the bitter humiliations with which my all too evident failure to attain practical results have afflicted me. I could not lay bare the secret aspirations that impelled me to seek for things which would have given me a place as a benefactor of my kind and enrolled me among the immortals. And suppose I had ever confessed that the mystery of ancient alchemy so impressed me that I must needs grasp at its only modern representative, chemistry—would not my friends have laughed at me?

What an atmosphere the chemical laboratory is for one of my temperament! What a fascination there is in the thought that the door of

escape for the world weary,—which, as dear old Epictetus said, is always open,—is so near—so near that one must needs be careful lest he pass the portals ere he is ready. How many times have I wondered if what the text books say of arseniureted hydrogen, and of anhydrous hydrocyanic acid is really true. And how many times have I been tempted to—well, to put them to a test on a fellow worker. Not upon myself, for I am not yet ready, and I do not court death by accident. My own death must be philosophic when it comes, not sudden and devoid of impressions. Then, too, the slower things are more to my taste—morphine for example. When I am ready—when life becomes insupportable boredom, or an intolerable ache, I shall know just where and how to seek surcease of world tire. And what a record I will write of my impressions. How deliberate and scientific it will all be. And how sure I will make it. These amateurs, with their crude methods and cowardly shrinkings back from the brink—faugh! how I detest them. The idiots! what a mess some of them make of it, and how some of them suffer. As for the fools who do such bungling work that any cheap doctor called in a hurry can undo the thing—

no words of mine can express my contempt for them. That doctor who swallowed six grains of morphine and then when the mist began to rise, sent for another fool of his own profession to succor him, was a coward and a bungler. But, I have said that a suicide is never a coward. Yes, and I meant it, too; that doctor was a pretender, and not born in the purple.

These love lorn servant girls and heart sick youths who drink to Death libations of carbolic acid are most amusing folk. They have courage, it is true, and doubtless mean well, but they lack the brains to be original and clever. They are faddists gone mad.

I have studied all of the methods of suicide in vogue and the more I see of them, the wiser I think I was in selecting chemistry as my life work. I have haunted the morgue; I have followed to that horrid, dripping, smelly slab, every case of suicide that has happened in this city. And such sights as I have seen! Bloated, festering masses of flesh that required great imagination to fashion into human semblance, fresh dragged from summer waters; distorted, blackened faces on agony twisted forms freshly cut down from self-made gibbets; heads blown open, brain-bespattered and powder-marked

by the pistol; limbs crushed and torn into disgusting masses and shreds of ghastly flesh, the bones staring through in besplintered protest against the savagery of men who seek rest beneath the crunching wheels of locomotives; sickening, fresh made gashes in throats that were once fair to look upon—all these have I seen and marveled at.

Only yesterday I saw lying upon that familiar slab, an old, old man—found dead in bed with his throat cut from ear to ear, a letter in his hand saying only this: "I am tired, so tired." "What a pity it is," I thought, as I looked at the fearful gash through which swollen tongue and severed larynx protruded, at the blood bathed clod which perchance had once been loved, "that this man should have lived so long without learning a way."

Then there was that dead man I saw taken from the river the other day. His friends knew of his business troubles and feared he had suicided. They sought for him for days and days, poor fools. They found him at last, and he went the way of all the others—to that vile slab. I was there when his sweetheart came to see his remains. They tried to keep her out, but she entered the room in spite of

them. I was not surprised at what happened. The transition from her ideal, the lover of her memory, to that slimy, oozy, bloated thing with the maggots swarming from its nose and eyes and ears, was enough to shock a stronger heart than hers. She died in a mad house, screaming against the maggots that she fancied were devouring her.

Ah, there's much of comfort in the thought that one has learned a way, and that my work in science has not all come to naught. How I admire that man of whom my friend Dr. X. told me this morning, who laughed at the doctors who worked a whole night over him, trying to save him from self poisoning. He would revive for a moment under their efforts and mutter, "No you don't, d—n you,—you can't do it!" and then lapse into coma again. He knew a way, did that man. The stupid doctors did not know. He, like myself, was a chemist. Was he merely defiant, or was it professional pride that animated him when he challenged those fool doctors, who came to interfere with his plans, but knew nothing of the symptoms produced by a clever admixture of laudanum and potassium cyanide? I glory in that noble man's artistic achievement—

I glory in his vindication of individual rights.

Existence is growing absolutely insupportable to me. My synthetic experiments with organic elements which seemed so promising have come to naught. Another of my failures! I haven't the energy to begin all over again, neither am I disposed to devise experiments in other fields. My brain is pumped out, like a dry well. My heart is dead. I suppose one might live with a dead heart, but what's the use? I begin to believe that it is time to—well, to follow the *way*. There, in that bottle upon the shelf, are four grains of—I wonder if my figuring was correct? There's surely enough. But suppose there should be too much? Pshaw! Why do I doubt? My experimental provings have been too carefully made to admit of suspicion of inaccuracy. That huge dog which—

Why not to-night? "If 'twere done, when 'tis done, 'twere well it were done quickly." There is no reason why I should not. My affairs— What affairs? I have no affairs. My family? There is none. My friends? Possibly there are some who will read the obituary in to-morrow's paper, and sorrow over the necessity of going to the "crank professor's"

funeral. They will have no keener regret, for, thank the fates, there will be no funeral expenses, and no contributions will be levied; I have attended to all that. My friend, Dr. X., is a prosector at the university, and to him my body is willed. He has promised to wire the skeleton for the museum. Good fellow, X. No sentimental gush about him. I wonder how the skeleton will look. I hope X. knows the French method of cleaning bones. It would be some satisfaction to know that mine will be white and glistening, and nice to handle. I wonder what those French fellows use that gives that faint sweet smell to newly bleached human bones. I suppose I might have written and found out, but I never thought of that.

As usual at this hour I am alone in the laboratory. It is barely possible that Professor A. may return to-night. I fancy he did not quite finish that experiment to-day. It would be embarrassing if he should come in before I had passed clear through the door. With that narcotic there would be great danger of such a mishap. I want to acquit myself at least as creditably as did that man of whom my friend Dr. X.— Great Charon! the very thing.

There should be a bottle of cyanide somewhere upon the shelves—

How very awkward! Who could have misplaced that bottle? I thought I knew just where to put my hand upon it. Well, there's no use fretting about it, to-morrow I will—Ah, now I think of it, there's a vial of anhydrous prussic acid in that little drawer in A.'s desk, and I have a key!

I fancy I can do the work much more artistically than did X.'s patient. I will take the narcotic in its most elegant and concentrated form, instead of that beastly tincture. I hate nauseous medicines. As for the prussic acid, I will use a hypodermic. Fortunately there is one yonder, in the room for animal experimentation. I will take the morphia first, and when it begins to act, I will get the syringe. There will be plenty of time.

How simple; just a tongue coating of powder—a mere fleeting dash of bitter—a draught of water and—so far the narcotic. Now, to await results.

How exhilarating the primary effects of opium. How easy to chronicle one's impres-

sions. How I can write! No wonder that De Quincey—; I seem to be in a brighter sphere. It is as though the air of the laboratory had turned to pure oxygen. What strength I feel! What mighty deeds could I not accomplish now? How large and vivid the gas lights are. There is an aureola of secondary glow about each of them. I would experiment with them tomorrow if— What music is that? Is it not beautiful? Why, I know that air—it is one my mother used to sing when I was a little lad—I remember how my dear little sister used to— But how faint the strains are now. And the lights are growing dim. It will soon be dark. My chair is rocking, too. How soothing and sensuous the motion seems. How drowsy I am getting—I must take that hypodermic before I get too sleepy.

There, that shows what will power can do. Some men would have gone to sleep and forgotten the rest of their plans. How orderly and systematic A. is, to be sure. No rummaging around in the drawer amid a confusion of things to find the prussic. How tight the stopper is. There, now I have it. Pshaw! I've spilled half of it on the floor and cut my fingers. How clumsy and numb my fingers are, and how

hot and fiery this blood is. How delightful the prussic smells.

Just a drop—the morphia will combine with it and neutralize it. The drugs will neutralize each other just sufficiently to give me plenty of time, and I shall still be able to write. Here, in my thigh—just here— Ah! My God! too m—.

CHIQUITA

I had been rambling about through Calaveras, investigating mining properties, and incidentally enjoying to the full the glorious weather of the early California spring. My search for the pot of gold at the foot of the rainbow had led me far up among the majestic Sierras—those wondrous mountains at the foot of which was verdure more beautiful than any artist could portray, while their snow-covered tops reared themselves proudly through the clouds and, peering beyond, seemed to challenge the very sky to descend and meet them. The ravines and gulches were tortured and torn by rushing torrents from the melting snows above. Every rivulet had become a brook, every brook a river, and every river a veritable Niagara.

So replete with the swift rushing yellow waters were the courses of the mountains and valleys, that the venerable wise-acre, yclept "the oldest inhabitant," was permitted by his neighbors to croak to his heart's content, and actually held his audiences while he regaled them with

the horrors of "the freshet of the spring of '61 and '62," and chilled the very marrow of their bones with the ominous prophecy that the present gorging of the streams was but the forerunner of a rising of the waters which should make the famous old-time flood of the Sacramento Valley fade into nothingness.

I had been leisurely retracing my steps from the mountains, and returning by the "Big Tree" road through the historic town of Murphy's Camp—made famous by Bret Harte, and interesting to me because I had there spent several of the years of my childhood—arrived at the little town of Vallecito, where I intended to inspect some placer property.

The ardent, coppery-red ball of the California sun was just descending behind the foothills to westward when I arrived at my destination, hence there was nothing to do save to make myself as comfortable as possible at the little ramshackle inn, "The Miner's Rest," and defer all thought of business until the morrow.

Life in the foothills of the Sierras may be monotonous, but it has its pleasant features, not the least of which was the fare of the humble Miner's Rest. I found that Mr. Jim Truesdell,

the landlord, had not boasted when he said genially, "We ain't much on style hereabouts, Mister, but you kin bet your bottom dollar our feed is just as good, an' just as plenty as it is at the Frisco Palace; tho' we ain't braggin' none about variety on our meenu kyards."

Having finished my supper, I lighted a cigar and strolled out upon the rude, tumble-down veranda of the little inn. Seating myself with my feet planted upon the railing and a book upon my lap, I proceeded to enjoy my smoke. Then—my book forgotten—I fell into the reverery which the fragrant smoke wreaths of a good cigar and the glorious flame of a dying sun bring to him who is at peace with himself and his surroundings.

More beautiful sunsets there may be than those of my native heath, but I have never seen but one that could in any way compare with them, and even there, in a harbor of far-off Guatemala, the conditions, save for the brilliant ocean rim below which the sun sank to sleep, were much the same. The mountains to the eastward of Vallecito recalled the Sierra Madre, of that distant alien land. There were the same fleecy clouds, illumined by the waning fire of the God of Day, reflecting colors that surely

would have been the despair of the most ambitious brush, and floating with soft caress over the snow-capped peaks which, like grim and watchful sentinels, walled in the valley where nestled the little town. There was just breeze enough blowing to give a keen zest to the balm-laden air of the mountains—a feature which that ever to be remembered scene in the Bay of Ocos distinctly lacked, for 'twas a miniature hell down there, night or day.

“Save for the weird cry of some mysterious night bird, who ever and anon called his mate, and the infrequent whir of a diminutive species of bat, everything was as quiet as a blue Sunday in staid old New England. The “chug” of the pick, the clamorous ring of the shovel and the rattling of the miner’s cradle were conspicuously absent in the valley and the hills and ravines round about. So still was the little mining town, that a giant elk who was sniffing the air in a spirit of curious and careful investigation far up the mountain side, came nearer and yet nearer, tossing his head with its burden of enormous horns in defiance at first, and then standing stock-still as if amazed. When he had finished his tour of investigation, he turned and stalked majestically away down the side of a

rocky gorge that would scarcely have afforded safe footing for a cat. He glanced back several times as though he did not quite understand his undisputed kingship, and then, with a farewell belligerent toss of his mighty antlers, plunged into the obscurity of the beautiful manzanita, and scraggly *mésquite* and chaparral that fringed the steep canyon sides of the awesome Sierras.

As the elk disappeared, a long, sobbing, terrifying wail was wafted from amid the scrub firs and tall bread pines still higher up on a distant mountain side. It was the cougar's warning to his tawny mate. The elk was not king, nor yet was the hungry panther, for somewhere amid those far-off mountain ravines was the lair of the grizzly, fiercest of his kind.

The last red glow of the setting sun had faded from the western sky and the chill of night was fast gathering, yet I still sat there upon the veranda, half asleep, but breathing in deeply the invigorating fragrant balm that was borne to me by the cool evening breeze from the spicy mountain firs and pines and giant redwoods. As I dozed my cigar fell from my lips and bounded off the veranda to the ground, where it lay glowering reproachfully at me for a few mo-

ments before it finally went out altogether, smothering in its own ashes and spitefully emitting, as a farewell indignant protest, the acrid odor of dead tobacco.

"Buenos tardes, Señor Caballero."

I came to myself with a start, and turned in the direction of the voice.

At the foot of the two or three steps that led to the veranda where I was sitting, stood a man and a woman—evidently Mexicans—as queer a couple as it had ever been my fortune to meet. The man was apparently about sixty years of age, taller than most of his race, still stalwart and erect and, despite his years, a handsome fellow of his type. He carried his head as haughtily as might an hidalgo of Old Spain. His picturesque costume was bedecked with finery which, faded though it was, indicated the garb of a Mexican of the higher caste. His swarthy face was shaded by an ornate sombrero, from beneath which flashed piercing, fiery eyes that would have compelled attention anywhere. A broad silk sash encircled his waist, and artistically draped over his shoulder were the graceful folds of a bright, many-colored *serape*. Through the sash was thrust the inevitable murderous-looking *cuchillo*—the symbol of his

individuality and a declaration of that belief in personal responsibility which is as inseparable from the hot Latin blood as though it were dependent upon a special corpuscle.

Unlike her companion, the woman presented a figure that was pathetic, rather than picturesque, although she too showed in her apparel something of the fondness for color and tinsel that characterizes her race. She appeared to be old—much older than her companion, although appearances are very deceptive in judging the age of women of the Latin races. They mature young, and their youth and beauty begin to fade very early, so early that at a period when the woman of fair Anglo-Saxon blood is yet in her prime, her darker-skinned sister is already old and wrinkled.

The old crone—for so she appeared—was bent and withered, with hair as white as human hair ever becomes. Her face was fearfully disfigured by smallpox, that loathsome disease which had become a curse to her people. As she raised her eyes towards me, I noted with something of a shock that she was totally blind—the dull and expressionless eyes showed that only too plainly. Used as I was to the sight of human misery and

helplessness, there was something in the poor old woman's face that impressed me.

"*Buenos tardes, Señor Caballero,*" again said the man, with a polite bow. "*Comprende V. Espanol?*"

"*Muy poco*—very little—*Señor,*" I replied.

"Then will I speak the tongue of the *Americanos*, though I speak it not well," he continued. "I hope *el Señor* he is not disturb in his smoke of the evening by the speaking to him."

"Not at all, Sir," I answered politely.

"Then, maybe, it is not too free to ask *el Señor* if he will have the fortune told."

"Oh, you are a fortune teller, eh?"

The Mexican raised his head proudly.

"*Non, Señor,* it is not I that have fortunes to tell. Ramon Pasquale never has told yet the fortune. He does not know. It is my Chiquita here, she the great fortunes can tell. She can see, oh, so far! She sees not as *el Señor* sees, with the eyes of the head;—it is with the eyes of the mind, with the eyes of the soul that Chiquita sees. She knows how the past to tell. Aye, and the future too, she knows. She the stars can read—she reads them true. The grave to her is not closed. Fate is to the eyes of her mind as is to *el Señor's* eyes the open book

upon his knee. She is wonderful, my Chiquita! Is it not so, *cara mia?*” There was a tender note in his voice as he addressed his aged companion.

“It is so, my Ramon,” replied the woman, in a voice that fairly startled me, so clear and youthful did it seem. “It is so, and if the great *Señor* will allow me it to tell, I will to him read the story of the past of his life, and for him open the book of the future, that he may know what shall come to him.”

My expression must have betrayed the interest I felt, for the Mexican said eagerly: “To-night must *el Señor* listen to Chiquita. To-morrow she will be gone, and it too late will be. It is not dear, *Señor*, it is *muy barato*—very cheap; only one *peso*; that is all. And so wonderful, so wonderful, *Señor*! There is none so wonderful as Chiquita. *El Señor* he will never forget the fortune she for him will tell—and only one *peso*.”

And Chiquita told my fortune, and evidently tried to give me good measure, for the stars were out and the moon was silvering the eastern sky ere she had finished.

Granting that Ramon was sincere, and not merely attending to business in his enthusiastic

praises of Chiquita's professional skill, he and I differed somewhat in our estimate of it. There was nothing very new about the fortune the old woman mapped out for me. It had the same rose color as many others I had heard. There were the usual platitudes about the honors I was to win, and the riches I was to gain. I would become famous, also, and was destined to marry a woman for whom my own country surely could hold no place, for, according to the fortune teller's description, she was to be a duchess, no less. Of course, as I did not tell Chiquita that I was already married, I could find no fault with the bride to be, especially as she was of the blood royal.

But Chiquita was eloquent, in her broken way, and both she and her picturesque companion were so interesting that I did not begrudge the dollar which, after all, she had fairly earned. To hear pleasant things about one's self is always worth the price—and there always is a price, although we are not often wise enough to know it.

There was that in the poise of Chiquita's white head and the sweetly modulated tones of her voice which, with her small, slender, beautifully formed brown hands suggested that her

birth and breeding were more aristocratic than is usual with itinerant vendors of fortunes.

I was curious to know more of the interesting couple, but had been riding hard that day, and the prospect of a good bed was just then more attractive than character study with a pair of strolling Mexicans for subjects. The séance of fortune telling ended, I was glad to pay for my entertainment and say good-night to them.

"*Gracias, Señor—buenos noches.* We are much thankful, my Chiquita and I. Is it not so, my Chiquita?"

The old woman bowed gracefully, and echoed her companion's expression of appreciation and farewell greeting. As I turned to enter the inn the landlord met me at the door, saying:

"Your room's all ready, Mister. It's been ready for more'n an hour. I seen you was havin' your fortune told, an' as the old gal allus dishes up as good ones for the money as can be had in these diggin's, I thought I wouldn't disturb ye. I hope ye got all the trimmin's that was comin' to ye," and he grinned expansively.

"I have no fault to find with the fortune the old woman told me," I replied smilingly; "it was doubtless better than I deserve, and I suspect much better than I will ever experience.

I was far more interested in Chiquita and Ramon, her companion, than in her skill as a fortune teller. I am curious to learn something of them. Do you know anything about them?"

"Why, no, leastwise not enough to hurt. The old gal is some sort of a gypsy, I reckon. She sure is, if there's any Mexican gypsies. The feller with her is a Greaser all right, though I'll allow I don't know nothin' else agin him. They blew in on this town about ten years ago, an' have been comin' here off an' on, workin' the fortune tellin' racket ever since."

"Well, they are not likely to get rich at it," I said. Vallecito does not seem to be a very profitable field for their particular specialty."

"Oh, I don't know about that," replied the genial Jim. "Of course, this town ain't what she was in the early days," and the old "forty-niner" sighed retrospectively. "But it ain't so bad, after all. It's a little out o' season now, but when strangers come through here on the way to Mariposa and Calaveras, I reckon it's pretty good pickin' for the old woman and her pal. The Big Trees and the Calaveras caves draw pretty good crowds, and they're the kind of people that's got mighty tender feet, too—an'

some money. I sort o' like them kind, myself."

"Is anything known of the history of those Mexicans before they came to this part of the country?" I asked.

"No; we folks don't ask questions much, an' Ramon, the Greaser, aint one of the talkative kind. Anyhow, he don't talk much to us. I reckon though, that some o' them tourists knows how to make him loosen up. There was a feller here once that writ stories for magazines an' such, who told me that Ramon had spun him some pretty wild yarns, an' I believe he writ some of 'em down in a book."

"Ah, then a story has been published about them."

"Well, I don't reckon it was published none," replied mine host, facetiously. "That writer feller tumbled off the footbridge into the Tuolumne Canyon about a week after that, an' I'm afraid he didn't go to press."

"But I'm runnin' a hotel, such as it is, an' hain't got much time for fairy tales, an' still less time for Greasers, which the same I don't like nohow."

Needless to say, my conversation with the landlord had only served to increase my curiosity. As I bade him good-night I resolved

to seek for Chiquita and Ramon in the morning. I had scented a romance; which meant with me that I must take the trail and run the story to earth.

I found the fortune teller and her companion in the cabin of a Mexican sheep herder, among the hills a little way out of town. This is the story that Ramon told me:

“Our story, *Señor*? It is not much, our story. What you have seen, that is all it is to tell. It is the story of Chiquita, my Chiquita, there, that you should hear. I, Ramon, know the story. Alas! too well do I know it. Listen, *Señor*:

“Many, many years ago, in the days when *los Americanos*—the *mineros*—were by hundreds here in Calaveras and in the valley of Tuolumne, a great *hacienda* there was, and a great mansion, near Sonora, just by the road that now runs to Vallecito. When the *Señor* rides to Sonora, at the right hand of the road will he yet see the stones of the crumbling walls of the house. He cannot mistake, for all along the road is there none other like it.

“Don Pedro Salvia, the name was, of the owner of the *hacienda*. Many broad acres of

the hills and valleys were his, and over those acres by the thousands grazed his cattle. All the land it was black with his droves of the long-horned breed of *la España*. Horses too, there were in vast herds. Never were seen mustangs so many and so fine and swift as those of Don Pedro. Many cattle and many mustangs mean always much money, and Don Pedro was *muy rico*—of great riches.

“The old Don was proud, oh, so proud, but not his great wealth was it that made him so. Of a famous and haughty race he was. None older was there in all Castile. His blood was what the *Americano* would call—what is it that they call the blood of the grandee? Ah, I remember—he was of the blue blood. None was there in all Spain so blue.

“In Sonora for many years had the Salvias been—so long that no *Americano* could remember when the family was not there. Before Don Pedro came, many, many generations of the Salvias had lived and died on the *rancheria*.

“Fate had laid its hand heavy on the blood of the Salvias, for the Don was of his race the last man. He had one child only—a daughter. La Doña Teresa, her poor mother, had died when she came—the little one.

"Chiquita was of Don Pedro's life the sun. He worshipped her even as worships the good Catholic the Madonna. Never was maiden so beautiful or so graceful. Ah! like the deer was she graceful. And she was no plant of the hot house. There was none among all the herders who could throw the *riata* as could Chiquita. Of all the *caballeros* of Sonora there was not one who in riding could match her. There was no mustang so wild that she could not tame him. And shoot! Not in all California was there a better shot with rifle or pistol than Chiquita.

"And, *Señor*, she was not afraid—as any *caballero* she was brave. As free and fearless as the young eagle she came and went among the rough hill people. Once only, was any man so bold as to give to Chiquita the insult. Ah! *Señor*, beautiful to see it must have been! Almost dead they found León Bodigo, the half breed. All of his blood it had run out. The maiden's little *cuchillo*, it was sharp, *Señor*.

"No companions had Chiquita, save the birds and flowers, and the trees and brooks of the mountains,—and Juan, her cousin. But she was happy and had never the—what you call it, eh? Ah, I have it, care. She had not

the care. She had never sorrow, and never had tears wet her beautiful eyes since she was small—so very small.

“Juan it was, who was of Chiquita the slave. He was not so old as Chiquita. He was a lad only—fourteen years of the age he was—but there was no *caballero* more strong of heart than he. Happy also, was Juan, for loved he not Chiquita? Yes, with all his soul he loved her. A thing wonderful to see was the love of Juan for the beautiful Chiquita!

“When the *vaqueros* made of the cattle the round up, with them rode Chiquita, and beside her was Juan—always Juan. You should have seen the riding, and of the herds the gathering, *Señor*. Nothing so grand is there now anywhere to see.

“Many times when the throw was made for the branding, and the fierce long-horn to the ground was brought, it was with the *riata* of Chiquita. And, Juan, too, made his throw for the iron. The count of Chiquita and Juan in the throwing of the cattle the best *vaquero* could not beat.

“But Paradise it is never to last. Dark days there came to the *rancheria* of the Salvias.

It was over again the story of—Eden, yes? In the beautiful garden the serpent?

“One day to the *rancheria* came *un Inglés*, an English Milord. A letter he bring from a friend of Don Pedro’s, asking that he be made welcome. That Englishman he was sick, very sick, *Señor*. Like a man who is starved he looked. *Dios!* he was white. He was so thin that when the wind blew he trembled like a leaf that on the tree is dead, and poof! poof!—how he had the cough! He could not sit the mustang, and the *vaqueros* they smile at him when he ride. So weak he was that on the ground he fall off—bang!

“But *el Medico* he have said that the Englishman he must ride, ride, ride—or with the lungs he will surely die. And so he try and try, for he had the pluck, that Englishman. By and by, he grow strong—strong like the bull. The air of the hills is like the old wine of Oporto and makes the great miracles. *Carramba!*—the air it did not know.

“When that Englishman he was strong to ride steady, Juan was happy no more. Wherever Chiquita was, there was Milord. He learned to throw the *riata* and with the *vaqueros* to ride the herd. They ride not badly, these

cursed *Inglés*. This fellow he ride bob! bob! bob! up and down, always up and down—but he ride straight like the soldier.

“How Juan hated that English Milord! Little fool, that Juan! He did not know that it was Juan that was too many in the riding of pleasure. Ah! he was the great fool—he thought it was the Englishman! For many days he thought this foolish thought. So it was, until one day Chiquita sent him away on a mission that was useless. When he came back, he saw her riding far away from the *hacienda*, far away in the hills. The Englishman he was beside her; so close to her he was that together their knees were touching. And then Juan knew! And then, so quick, like the lightning, grew he from boy to man—and such a man!

“It runs hot, the blood of my people, *Señor*, and in the veins of none of his race had it ever run hotter than it ran that day in the veins of Juan. And bitter it ran, and everything it was red to the eyes of Juan. One thing only was there to do; the Englishman must die, and Juan he must kill him!

“The next day again into the hills rode Chiquita. Milord, the cursed Milord, was as always beside her. Juan saw them at the

corral in the starting, and taking his rifle he crawl, like *una serpiente*, on the belly through a gulch between the hills that open on the road at the turning. In the chapparal he crouched and waited, like the panther that is hungry. Nothing could save Milord, for when did Juan ever miss the mark?

“But Chiquita made with the Englishman a race, and so swift was her mustang that far behind she left him. To the turn of the road she came alone. Juan heard the beating of the hoofs and thought it was time. He stood straight up behind the brush of the greasewood and manzanita, with his rifle at his shoulder—so! Chiquita saw, and all at once she knew.

“So sudden it all was, and she ride so quick, that Juan was close—oh, so close—to killing Chiquita before he saw who was the rider.

“Straight at him the mustang she rode, and then she stopped and looked into his eyes; oh, so sad she looked. For a long time she looked at him. He saw that she knew, and it was not the eyes of Chiquita that fell—it was Juan’s. And then she spoke:

“ ‘It is not for me, that my cousin he waits. In his eyes is there murder, but it is not for his Chiquita that he sees red. Is my cousin Juan

a coward, that he lies in ambush? Does he love me no longer? Is it that he would kill one whom I love? Go, and go quickly, that he may not see you—that he may not know that my little Juan has put upon Chiquita and the house of Salvia the great shame.'

"The Englishman he was not come to the bend of the road before Juan was gone. And Juan came not back to the *hacienda* for the many, many days. No one knew where he had gone, but he was not far. He was near in the mountains; like the cougar and the grizzly he was hiding. Far from Chiquita he could not go. Many the times she have passed him as he crouched in the *mésquite*, but she did not know. Always was her Englishman to ride beside her. Three, four, ten times could Juan have killed him, but would not! Was it not that Chiquita had said she have come to love the Milord? And she have said, too, that it is coward to shoot from the ambush. Juan loved Chiquita; her heart he would not make to ache, and, *Señor*, he was not coward, that little Juan!

"Every day, for many, many days, Juan, from his hiding could see of the rides, the starting—Chiquita and the Englishman—always the cursed *Inglés*! Not always would they ride near



"IS MY COUSIN JUAN A COWARD, THAT HE LIES IN AMBUSH?"

Juan. One way sometimes, then next day another way, but every day some way they ride—Chiquita and her Englishman. And they ride so close, so very close—so close together they ride that Juan sometimes forgets almost, and then he looks at the rifle. So hungry he looks at it, and how the itching it is in the fingers! Always is it loaded, the rifle, and it carries far and true the bullet when Juan fires it. He is fine shot, that little Juan.

“One day Chiquita and the Englishman they not ride together. The Milord is alone. Next day is he alone once more. He does not ride the way of Juan. That is good, for Chiquita is not there, and to remember is hard when she is not there, and the gun it is loaded.

Two days, then, the Englishman he ride alone. The second day, in the evening, Juan sees the *vaqueros* and the women run, and run—they run about like jack-rabbits. And then they gather together and talk, talk, always they talk; like *el loro*, the parrot, they talk. There is no work. For two days, Juan has not seen Don Pedro.

“The third day, in the morning, everything is like dead at the *hacienda*. No one is stir, only sometimes the dogs they bark. By and by comes the Englishman out of the house, springs

quick on his mustang and like the wind he is off. He rides close by Juan, so near that the boy he could have plucked him off his horse. And the Englishman's face it was white—white just like a corpse. He ride like he is scared—like *el diablo*—like the devil he ride!

“Juan, too, was scared. He was sure something go bad, very bad, at the *hacienda*. And so he is go down to the place and look all around, but he is see nobody—they are all gone, the *vaqueros* and the women.

“And then Juan go into the house. There he find Don Pedro dying with *la viruela*, the small-pox, *Señor!* with nobody to care for him but Chiquita, and one old woman that was call for the joke, La Bonita, the beautiful, because she have the pest long before and was, oh, so ugly! Ah! the face of Don Pedro! It was horrible; it made Juan to grow sick!

“But Juan stay and help the women. At first the boy he was afraid, but he loved Chiquita, and soon the pest he forgot.

“Well, *Señor*, soon and sure the end was. In five days Don Pedro he was dead. And Juan and La Bonita they bury him, with nobody to help. Chiquita her heart is break. She cry and cry and cry, but Juan he knew it was not

all for that her father was dead. She would not tell Juan, but he knew. The coward *Inglés* that have run away—for him also were the tears.

“A few days more and Chiquita too, was take sick with the pest. This time it was not the black smallpox—but it is bad, very bad. *Jesu!* How the old woman and the boy they make the fight for Chiquita! And Chiquita she is not die—she get well. Her face it is scar—so bad is it scar that La Bonita herself is not less beautiful than the poor Chiquita. And Juan he is afraid—for some day she will know, so he take away from the house all the bright things and the mirrors and tell La Bonita the young *Señorita* must not know. And the old woman she understand, ah! too well she understand. She remember the sorrow of the day she herself first saw the scar of her face, and she is careful of Chiquita.

“When Chiquita she could once more walk about and breathe the sweet air of the pines, everywhere with her went Juan. Once again it was Juan—always Juan.

“When Chiquita she grew strong again, as before the pest came, the poor boy he might have been happy, but for one thing—tears, tears, always tears in the eyes of Chiquita! And

Juan he knew they were not all for Don Pedro. Always in her mind that cursed Milord! Her heart it still ache for the coward Englishman.

"Long walks Chiquita and Juan they take together. She could again ride, but never did she ask for her mustang. She for riding cared no more. Always, you see, she is think of the Englishman. And Juan, he know why she wished not to ride, and his heart it was lead.

"But Juan was kind, so very kind to Chiquita. Always he loved her, and the scar of the face made to him no difference. But every day does he fear the time when she must know. That time, so much does he fear it, that the brooks he would not let her cross; he was afraid that in them her face she might see; yet still did he know sure that sometime she must see it.

"By and by the people is come back to the *rancheria*, and Juan he is do the best he can to take care of the place, and the cattle and the horses. For a little while things they go along like before the pest it have kill Don Pedro.

"One day Juan he go into the hills for the round up, and for two days he come not back. Before he go he tell La Bonita to keep good watch of the poor Chiquita, but all the same he is

afraid. All the time of the riding after the cattle he is afraid it goes not well with Chiquita.

"When Juan he is get back from the round up, the great trouble it have come. Chiquita she is mad—she have gone crazy, *Señor*, and she does not know anything—not anybody does she know!

"From La Bonita Juan hears the story. The Englishman he has come back to see what is happen at the *hacienda*. Chiquita is so glad she almost die with the gladness, but *el Inglés*, he is see her poor face with all the scar, and he is look, 'Ugh!' He say nothing, but he look the 'Ugh!'

"La Bonita she hear the Englishman tell Chiquita he must say *adios*—for the last time he must say it. She cry, and cry, and cry, like the heart it is to break, and she hold tight to the coat of Milord. And then he push her away hard, so! and tell her about the scar on her face, and she not understand—she not believe. So he take from his pocket *el espejo*, the looking-glass, and hold it before Chiquita!

"La Bonita she hear the great scream and run quick to Chiquita. She find her on the floor like one who is dead. The Englishman he is not there—he is gone, but on the floor is the devil

looking-glass. La Bonita made the curse, and crush the glass into the thousand pieces, so! If the Englishman he had not gone she sure would have kill him, that old woman! She with the poniard could aim true, that Bonita, and for the blood of Milord was she thirsty.

"When he have the work to do, *el Mexicano* make not the hurry, but when he must kill his enemy, *Señor*, then does he never say *mañana*—the to-morrow. To-day is the time he must kill.

"Juan stayed not long at the *hacienda*. He leave Chiquita with the old woman, and saddle his mustang and ride—swift as the bird flies, rode Juan. The *vaqueros* they tell him the Englishman he have ride through Sonora, and so Juan he go that way.

"Does *el Señor* know where is the ferry on the Stanislaus?"

"Yes," I said, "I know the place well."

"Then, the *Señor* he will remember that the mountains are at the ferry high, very high and steep like the wall. The Stanislaus in the spring is so swift that in it a man could not live one second. The rocks, ah! *Señor*, the rocks in the canyon of the Stanislaus they are plenty, and they are sharp and cruel.

"It was not then as now. There was no

ferry, and one must cross by a foot-bridge. The freshet of the spring-time it had washed the bridge away. Very high was then the Stanislaus! When the foot-bridge it was go, one must wait, and wait, and wait—he must wait for the going down of the water and for the *mineros* a new bridge to build.

“In the cabin of a *minero* away up on the mountain side the Englishman was wait for the water to go down and the bridge to be built. Here it was that Juan find him.

“He could fight, could that cursed *Inglés*, and he was so strong that in his hands only a child was that little Juan! But the boy he have the courage, and the right—and, *Señor*, he have the poniard. It is the poniard that makes the strength as nothing.

“In the cabin of the *minero* the fight began, and so weak was Juan in the hands of *el Inglés* that he was by him push through the door and to the edge of the canyon. It is very deep, that canyon, and to the bottom a very long way, and Juan he know what happen if he is not quick and sure.

“The wrist of Juan it is not strong, and his enemy he hold it tight in his hand, so! But, when the Englishman he take the boy around

the waist for throw him over the side of the canyon, his foot it make the slip and he fall back! As he fall he let go the wrist of Juan!

“Ah! now for Milord is there no more chance! He must sure die! Quick, like the rattlesnake, struck the boy! One! Two! Three!—five times he bury the knife in the Englishman!

“And when the Englishman fall limp on the ground, Juan is cover thick with the hot red blood. It have spurt, and spurt—all over him it have spurt!

“The Englishman he is not yet so dead that he does not understand when Juan say: ‘My Chiquita, she have send her love to the Milord who was so kind as to show to her in the looking-glass her face.’

“And then Juan laugh in the man’s face as he die.

“When the Englishman he was no more, Juan roll and roll him to the edge of the canyon. He was not strong for the lift, but he could make the push and the roll of the body. When the body was at the edge, Juan make one grand push and crash! over the Englishman go!

“Perhaps *el Señor* he not *comprende*—he have not the hot blood of *un Español*. But,

maybe, he too have enemies, and knows the hate, and the feelings of Juan can understand.

"Never was music so sweet to the ear of that little Juan, as the sound of the dead Englishman making the fall. Every time the body it strike the rocks, it bound off like the ball, and spatter much blood! Very beautiful to the eyes of Juan was the red trail of the body on the canyon side.

"When the body of Milord reach the bottom, he look no more like a man—he is like he is blown to the mince-meat by the blast of powder. He fall into the Stanislaus in many pieces, splash! splash! and when Juan saw this, he was happy—*Dios!* for the one minute he forget.

"Of the story of Chiquita there is not much more to tell, *Señor*. When Juan was get back to the *hacienda*, she was still not know anybody. *El Medico* say she have of the brain a bad sickness. She live, but she no more can see—she is blind!

"And never has Chiquita remembered—*Gracias à Dios!*

"Not long was it before the *rancheria* of the Salvias is go to ruin. They all go away, the *vaqueros* and the women. La Bonita, she stay like the faithful dog till she die. And then

was Chiquita alone—alone, till she have found Ramon.”

Here the story-teller gazed tenderly toward the door of the herder's cabin, where in the quiet shadows just within, sat a pathetic white-haired figure.

“But what became of Juan?” I asked.

There was a peculiar light in the Mexican's eyes as he replied:

“Long, long ago he die—that little Juan. It was well that he die, for when Ramon came, then was there no more need of Juan. Then, too, my poor Chiquita did not know, and why was it then that Juan should live?”

A DEAD IDEAL

A ROMANCE OF THE DISSECTING ROOM

I had been practising medicine for some years, and had grown tired of the hard daily grind of the general practitioner. I longed for a vacation, but medicine is a hard task mistress and with the busy physician economy of time is so essential that his so-called "rest" is usually merely a change of work. I felt that it must be so with me, and resolved to hie me to some of the eastern centers of medical teaching and take a post graduate course in several special subjects. Polyclinics and post graduate schools being then unknown, I went to New York and matriculated at one of that city's famous schools, one which had attained a high reputation for practical bedside instruction and abundant clinical material.

It was with all the enthusiasm of a school boy, that I enrolled my name upon the college roster and settled down to earnest work in the hospital wards and dissecting rooms.

As I was desirous of mingling with my class-

mates as much as possible, and was not averse to a certain degree of practical economy, I formed a combination with three undergraduates, who were recommended to me as desirable associates, and became a guest of a medical students' boarding house—an establishment characterized by abundant opportunities for the study of entomology and the effects of prolonged fasting upon the human body, rather than by the abundance and variety of its larder. As was the custom among medical students, we clubbed together and occupied a large single room—none too elaborately furnished, but very comfortable withal, and made rather attractive by a large, old fashioned fireplace.

My room-mates were most agreeable associates, although not altogether harmonious in tastes and methods of study. Two were young Southerners—men of superior attainments, but typic ladies' men, and fond of social dissipation and excitement. Both were possessed of some means, and had adopted our mode of living because of social and bohemian instincts rather than from motives of economy. Time was an unimportant factor with them, hence they rarely suffered from over-study, although they

were often the worse for the wear and tear of social dissipation. If ever there was a well matched pair of college cronies it was my young friends, Will Richardson and Charles Favell.

The fourth member of our circle, Harold Parkyn, was about my own age, and as different from our jovial room-mates as possible. He had been an artist, it seems, and an unappreciated one, which was no fault of his, for he had talent that fell but little short of genius. Despairing of success in his chosen profession and abhorring commercial pursuits, he had entered medicine at a rather late period in life.

I have rarely met a man so ill adapted by nature to medicine as was Parkyn. He was a fine, athletic, handsome fellow, with a clear cut, refined and classical face, and magnificent dark eyes which evidenced a temperament far too esthetic, and emotional faculties too exalted and sensitive to withstand the physical and mental strain incidental to intimate association with human suffering. His first visit to the dissecting room was harrowing to witness, and it was weeks before he made an attempt to qualify in practical anatomy. At his first surgical clinic he fainted outright. A large part of the disagreeable features of caring for

the sick filled him with disgust. And yet, Parkyn was plucky; his was not a spirit to be easily discouraged, and he applied himself persistently to the task of subduing his finer feelings and acquiring the proverbial callosity of the medical student—an effort in which he most signally failed.

Parkyn was not only of a delicately sensitive nervous organization, but he was rather peculiar in his ways. Affable at times—when his chums were indulging in jollity—he was generally one of the most reserved and taciturn men I have ever met; especially was he unsocial in the presence of ladies. So noticeable was this peculiarity that the young women of the household had dubbed him “Old Crusty”—which disturbed his serenity not at all, even when Richardson and Favell, in a spirit of mischief and with great show of formality, adopted the sobriquet applied to him by the ladies. In grave and solemn caucus these young gentlemen decided that Parkyn was a confirmed woman hater, and deservedly doomed to die an old bachelor. Their favorite occupation was the reading of love letters which they pretended to have received, and the exhibition of photographs of pretty girls to “Old Crusty.”

Being a practitioner, and therefore concededly the oracle of our little student family, I was a sort of balance wheel to the party, standing between the occasional over-exuberance of Richardson and Favell on the one hand, and the extreme sensitiveness of Parkyn on the other.

One evening as we were all sitting before the fireplace enjoying our after-dinner pipes, Favell brought out from the recesses of his wonderfully productive pocket, a photograph of a most beautiful woman, and with a fine show of counterfeit embarrassment, exhibited it as "The picture of a very dear friend of mine, down home—just received this morning. Very charming girl—particular friend of my sister's," etc. etc.

The picture was certainly beautiful, and if Favell was telling the truth he had reason to be proud of the charming young woman's acquaintance, but as I looked at the photograph, I fancied I remembered having seen it before, in a stationer's shop. I made no comment, however, and Favell proceeded to launch the arrows of his wit at Parkyn.

"Say, old man, here is something that ought to stir your blood at last! How can you remain a woman hater and know that there are such charming creatures on this old planet of ours as

Miss—Ahem!—the original of this photograph? Ah! your eyes are actually growing green with envy. You dear old stick, you! Has it been merely a slight touch of sour grapes after all? Tell me, old fellow, did you ever see anything so beautiful as this face? Did you ever know a lovelier girl?"

Parkyn rose from his chair, and with a mournful expression replied, "One only, my dear boy, and she—but pardon me," he said, coloring up, "you well know that the subject of ladies is one which—bores me. I must leave such things to social butterflies like yourself and our mutual friend Richardson here. And, by the way, gentlemen, I must hie myself to a subject even more distasteful than that of woman in the abstract. I promised Professor Van Buren that I would finish that abominable dissection of the upper extremity to-night. You see that the trend of Favell's conversation has driven me to extremities. Yes, thank God! to my last extremity." Saying which he withdrew.

"Now, see here, boys," I said, after Parkyn had gone. "You mustn't tease our friend so outrageously. If I am not mistaken you hit him on a tender point just now, and he is far

too sensitive and high-strung to always take your badinage so good naturedly as he did to-night. I suspect that Harold Parkyn is quite as human as the rest of us and that he—well, who knows that he may not be bitterly mourning over the grave of buried hopes? No, boys, you must let him alone. You may be inflicting pain upon him.”

“By Jove, doctor!” exclaimed Favell, “I never thought of that. I’ll just bet the dear old fellow has had a love affair. And it hasn’t turned out right; that’s what’s the matter. I’ll apologize to him as soon as he returns.”

“Yes, and a fine mess you’ll make of it!” said Richardson. “You would better let well enough alone. We’ll both have a little sense and delicacy hereafter. To tell the truth, I have for some time been a little ashamed of my part in our chaffing, and I’m only too glad to reform.”

Parkyn was very thoughtful for several days after the affair of the photograph, and even more reserved than usual. The boys kept their promises and did not again attempt to banter him. I fancied that he understood the studious politeness and affectionate consider-

ation with which he was subsequently treated, although there was no comment.

Several weeks later, Parkyn and myself chanced to be alone together and, as is likely to be the case among young professional men, our talk drifted into a discussion of our aims and ambitions in life. In the course of the conversation I quite naturally commented upon the wide variance between Parkyn's former profession and the one in the study of which he was then engaged.

"It has always puzzled me to understand, I said, how a man of your artistic temperament and admitted ability, could ever have deserted the profession of art for that of medicine."

"Well," replied Parkyn, "you have doubtless forgotten the fact which I long ago frankly stated to our mutual friends and yourself, that I was not highly appreciated by the public and finally despaired of success—not in making a living, for I could by dint of strong exertion do that—but in attaining the position in my profession which I felt was justly my due. I, myself, often wonder why I finally selected medicine as my field of labor, but I couldn't sell groceries; the law wouldn't do at all, and the ministry was out of the question, so there

seemed to be nothing but medicine left." Parkyn sighed, and remained for some moments dreamily gazing into the fire-place and listlessly poking at the glowing coals with the tongs.

"But, my dear fellow," I said, "you have selected a profession that is nearly as difficult as art, so far as winning fame and financial success is concerned, and moreover, one which has by comparison no features of attractiveness. You will pardon me if I also say that medicine is a profession to which your sensitive organization is but poorly adapted."

Parkyn arose and nervously paced the floor. He finally paused and facing me said, "Doctor, I realize the truth of what you say only too keenly, and what is more I detest your profession so far as I have gone. I have, however, determined not only to overcome my repugnance to it, but to blunt by sheer force of will the peculiarities of organization to which you have alluded. Distasteful as it is, medicine is delightful by comparison with the hell into which my chosen profession, art, finally precipitated me. Ye gods, man! You do not realize what—but pshaw! this is not interesting to you, and besides, I never talk of myself."

"See here, Parkyn," I said, "it might be far

better for you to talk about yourself a little, especially to one who understands you—as I think I do. I have often suspected that there was a story connected with your change of profession and from the best of motives I am anxious to hear it. Come now, old man, out with it—I am as interested and sympathetic as you please, and as deep and silent as a well.”

Parkyn reflected for a moment and then replied, “I am quite sure you understand me much better than most of my friends, but I do not fancy being thought ridiculous, even by you, and my story might seem absurd to a man of your philosophic and rather lymphatic temperament.”

“Oh, nonsense!” I exclaimed, “I’m not so lymphatic as you seem to think. Philosophy puts a check on the impulses of the heart, while art lets them roam fancy free, yet human nature is the same in both philosopher and artist, so fire away, old fellow; I’m all ears—evolutionary relics you know.”

Parkyn leaned languidly against the corner of the mantel, his chin resting upon his hands and began:

“The details of my career up to the date of the circumstances that impelled me to leave

the profession for which nature adapted me, are commonplace. My life was that of the average poor boy of artistic tastes and talents, who fights his way to the attainment of a thorough professional training. By hard work, I succeeded in getting enough money together to enable me to study with the most celebrated masters of Europe. I finally settled down in my native city, Boston, and after many trials and vicissitudes, was in due time in a fair way to earn a respectable living, although fame was by no means beating her angelic wings against the windows of my studio. It was too near the roof, I fear," and Parkyn smiled somewhat bitterly.

"It so happened that the society of artists of which I eventually became a member, instituted a yearly exhibition of paintings patterned after the Paris Salon. As an act of extreme condescension I was especially invited by the directors of the exhibition to contribute. The invitation was gladly accepted and I promptly began casting about for a suitable theme—a matter that often constitutes the most difficult part of the artist's labors. The department of painting in which I was particularly adept was the study of the nude and I quite naturally resolved to produce something in the line of my

favorite work. And then came the search for a model.

"Contrary to the popular notion, a satisfactory model is a very scarce commodity. The human form divine rarely stands the keen professional criticism of the eye artistic. A picture is oftener the composite of several models than the actual delineation of one. The arms and shoulders of one, the feet of another, and the torso of still another may be required. Several months passed away and although the time for the exhibition was dangerously near, I had not yet found what I sought. As you may imagine, I was in despair, for having set my heart upon a certain subject for my picture, I was loth to abandon it, for another of less interest. And now comes the strangest part of my story—the part which I fear is hardly materialistic enough for you, my dear doctor," and Parkyn hesitated.

"Go on, go on!" I exclaimed.

"I had always been an ardent student of the classics, and was in the habit of reading for an hour or two before retiring. In selecting a book almost at random from the modest little collection of odds and ends—by courtesy my library—I happened one evening to get

hold of an old treatise on mythology. While reading of the gods and goddesses therein described, and admiring the artistic opportunities afforded by the social circle in which the heathen deities moved, I fell asleep in my chair, and dreaming, found that for which I had vainly sought in my waking hours—my model.

“You as a practical physician will doubtless attribute my dream to the direct impression made upon my brain by the character of the book I had been reading, and I must admit that my experience had certain features which would justify such an opinion, yet I feel nevertheless that my dream model had a basis of reality.

“I seemed to be in the midst of a vast garden—the most beautiful I had ever seen. The flowers and shrubs surpassed all forms with which I was familiar. Hovering over the rare and many hued exotics were gorgeous butterflies and humming birds, to which no description could possibly do justice. The air was redolent with the odor of the blossoms and vibrant with the songs of rare birds and the melodious strains of unseen musical instru-

ments. 'Surely,' I thought, 'this must be Paradise.'

"As I stood gazing enraptured upon the sensuous things surrounding me I became conscious that I was not alone. The garden was peopled with forms, among which I recognized some of the more familiar of the mythologic deities whom I had just left within the covers of my book. As these luminous beings passed and repassed me, I perceived that there was some central object of attraction. They appeared to be gathering about a beautiful fountain that stood, half hidden by flowering plants and foliage, in the center of the garden. Feeling that my human curiosity was justified by that which even the celestial beings about me were exhibiting, I approached the spot and there beheld a scene which astonished and delighted me beyond measure.

"Just within the spray of the fountain that glittered and sparkled with surprising brilliancy, showing combinations of colors which I had never before seen, was a golden, shell-like couch. Upon, or rather within this couch, lay the sleeping form of a most beautiful woman! Gazing upon this lovely creature, I was not surprised that the strange beings about me were attract-

ed by her beauty. My own artistic eye was fairly entranced. I saw at once that the object of my admiration was different from the beings who peopled the celestial garden. She was human—although the loveliest of woman-kind.

“My first feeling of mingled awe and admiration was soon replaced by a most gratifying sense of triumph. I had found what was to me a much desired object—a perfect model for my picture! With feverish haste I drew sketch book and pencil from my pocket and endeavored to outline the only perfect female form I had ever seen.

“As is usual in the dream state, I found that I had lost all power of doing those things which were part of my daily life. I could not draw a single line; my artistic talent and indeed, even the power of voluntary motion necessary in drawing, was wholly gone. You may imagine how I despaired. Everything was real to me, and my inability to sketch the model for which I had so long sought in vain, was most distressing, so distressing that I awoke.

“I was greatly impressed by my dream, but inclined to smile at the keen disappointment that I felt on awaking. The peculiar circum-

stances under which I had found my model were naturally aggravating, but I consoled myself with the reflection that dream pictures are not very substantial after all, and that even though the sketch which I attempted had been made, my sketch book would have been rather evanescent. It certainly would have been lost on the way back to earth.

“Whether because of the vivid impression the vision of the female loveliness made upon me, I cannot say—you are a practical psychologist and should know more of such matters than I—but my dream repeated itself in every detail the following night. Even my unsuccessful endeavor to sketch the beautiful woman was faithfully reproduced, and I again awoke to the consciousness of keen disappointment at the loss of a long sought artistic opportunity.

“A detailed reproduction of a dream, is as you know, not common, but I felt intuitively that a further repetition would quite likely occur and when I retired on the second night following the original dream, it was with a fixed determination to so impress the vision of loveliness I had seen upon my mind, that I could from memory alone, utilize the model which had come to me in such a strange fashion.

"The wished for dream occurred precisely as on the two previous nights, and I remember making a most earnest endeavor to photograph the wonderful model upon my memory—an effort in which I was only too successful. When I awoke, my model was so vividly pictured in my mind that the work of reproducing her upon canvas was no more difficult than if her living form had been actually before me.

"And then came the disaster of my life. It was the story of Pygmalion and Galatea over again. I began my work with the enthusiasm of the artist, and completed it with the ardor of the man. I fell in love with my own creation! The self-confessed misogynist, who had never been susceptible to the real in womankind, became enslaved by an ideal from dreamland which my brush had metamorphosed into something material. I finally became intoxicated with the idea that my model must herself have a material being; that the feminine perfection I had seen in the vision was but the dream picture of a real personage—a fair woman who actually lived in the flesh!

"My picture was done! It was destined to be my last and, like the song of the dying swan, it was my masterpiece. But I had no longer a

thought of the exhibition. I became infatuated with the idea that through some occult and mysterious influence I had had the opportunity of utilizing as a model the fairest of womankind. It was not by her own volition that she became my model. To hang her picture at the exhibition would be a crime. The most beautiful model in the whole world should not be gazed upon by the vulgar herd. She was mine, and mine alone. She was real; she lived, and one day we should meet, and then—

“Ah, me! Was it not thus that Aphrodite breathed the spark of life, the material essence of reality into the ivory form of Galatea? Such is the power of that worship of the ideal that the Philistine calls love, over the human heart!

“There is little more to be told. My picture became a shrine at which I worshipped by day and dreamed by night. Its possession was happiness. The failure to find the original was the acme of misery. I lost all interest in the art that had created the painting, and the very thought of devoting the talent which had developed my ideal to subjects that must ever be less worthy became abhorrent to me. My all of art, my all of life, my loftiest aspirations were there in the beautiful painting, the

model for which had come to me in my dreams.

"Ah, my dear doctor!" exclaimed Parkyn, as he extended his hand imploringly towards me, "do not laugh at me. Be something more than a man of science, something more than a materialist, and do not discourage me when I say that I know that my ideal lives, know that somehow, somewhere, I am to meet her!

"You have heard my story, my dear friend. You are the first to whom I have told it, and shall be the last."

"My dear Parkyn," I said, when my friend had finished his story, "the very essence of materialism itself, should respect the artistic and emotional nature that could develop such an experience as you have had. I am, myself, by no means so materialistic as you suppose. We have not yet solved the mysteries of psychology. We know nothing of the workings of human affinities, and there are those, even among us men of science, who are not altogether blind to the possibilities of the occult. Men have been shattered upon the rocks and shoals of ideality before, and will be again. Not all could have so pure and fair an ideal as you have described. Your vision was extraordinary, and although as a physician I might descant to you

on the relation of over-work and lack of exercise to figments of the imagination, still as a man, and one in whom the finer sensibilities are not yet dead, I must acknowledge that I not only sympathize with you, but I—well, I myself suspect that there is somewhere a substantial foundation for your dream. It is by no means impossible that you may one day find your model, and, my dear fellow, I sincerely hope you will."

Parkyn grasped my hand warmly, and stood in silence for a moment, then, with an expression of gratification and happiness such as I had never before seen on his face, he said slowly:

"You do, indeed, understand me, doctor. Your medical philosophy is tinctured with just enough of the fire of romance, your heart has just enough of the emotional attributes of the true artist, to enable you to be something more than a mere compounder and prescriber of drugs. I understand now, why you have a penchant for psychology. Wise is he who hath read the chapter on hearts in the book of human life!"

The end of the college term was drawing near, and even Favell and Richardson had settled

down to something like earnest work preparatory to examinations. I had just finished my dissections, as had my room-mates several weeks before, hence had no occasion to visit that gloomy and dismal room above stairs known as the hall of anatomy. When, therefore, we heard one day of a marvellously interesting subject that had just been brought over from Blackwell's Island, our interest was not especially excited. The dissecting room is by no means haunted by students who have finished their prescribed course in anatomy. It seems, however, that one of Favell's friends had induced him to go up to the dissecting-room one morning to inspect the anatomic wonder, which I had understood somewhat vaguely, was the body of a remarkably beautiful woman.

Parkyn, Richardson and myself were just preparing to go to dinner, meanwhile wondering what had become of the ever-hungry Favell, when that worthy broke into the room in a state of great excitement, crying, "Say, boys, you just ought to see the subject that's come in from the Island! Gee, whiz! but it's a beauty—the handsomest thing in the shape of a woman that ever was born! Why, half the artists and all the newspaper men in New York have been up

to see it. They're all crazy over it. You boys must go up and look at it tonight, and if you don't say that body is the most beautiful thing you ever saw, I'll buy the dinners for the crowd. I mean you, especially, Parkyn. I suspect that you are much cleverer than any of those daubers who have seen it, and I know you'll revel in the beauties of what might have been an artist's model."

Richardson and myself promptly agreed to visit the nine days wonder, but it was with extreme difficulty that I induced Parkyn to accompany us. When he did finally yield to my entreaties he turned a deaf ear to my urgent request that he take some sketching materials with him.

"You well know, doctor," he said, "that I have reformed. I never sketch. Sketching is a lost art so far as I am concerned. You forget, my dear friend—"

I suddenly remembered, and was silent. I alone understood the sentiments that inspired his refusal.

Evening came, and our little party proceeded to the chamber of horrors which, as I supposed, Favell's boyish nonsense had converted into a mortuary of dead female beauty. I more than

half suspected a practical joke. My young friend was much given to such diversions.

Arriving at the dissecting room, we found a large congregation of men standing about one of the tables. Here and there I could see several who, sketch-book in hand, were busily at work utilizing what they evidently considered an artistic opportunity. Favell and Richardson, boylike, pushed their way through the crowd, while Parkyn and I leisurely brought up the rear. I heard the demonstrator of anatomy say—

“Well, gentlemen, we must begin our dissection. We have already devoted too much time to sentiment.”

As the professor poised his gleaming scalpel over the body, Favell exclaimed, “Wait just a moment, sir, please, here comes Parkyn.”

The professor, with whom the cultured and artistic Parkyn was a favorite, stayed his hand, and with knife upraised, waited. The crowd made way for my friend, and I stepped aside to allow him to pass ahead of me.

There are some events which are so replete with action and dramatic excitement that no one, however observing, can faithfully describe them. Note upon this point the conflicting testimony of disinterested eye-witnesses in mur-

der trials. Such was the scene which followed the introduction of Parkyn to the presence of that body.

There was a yell like that of a maniac, a swift rush, the collision of two bodies, a heavy fall! As I sprang quickly into the midst of the swaying, trampling, excited crowd about the table, the demonstrator, pale and frightened, was just rising from the floor, his scalpel still in his trembling hand and his face cut and bleeding where his assailant had struck him in the first mad rush. Parkyn was still lying on the floor, and on endeavoring with the assistance of several students to raise him to his feet, I saw that he was insensible. Upon his temple was a deep, jagged gash where his head had come in contact with the corner of the table.

Temporary emotional insanity in a man of highly wrought nervous organization was the universal verdict, and it was with genuine sorrow and regret that poor Parkyn's fellow students took him to the hospital, apparently in a lifeless condition.

But Parkyn did not die—his skull was not fractured. This was very fortunate, in the light of subsequent events, for he developed symptoms of meningitis, and hovered between life

and death for many weeks. I remained in the city to care for him and was a proud and happy man when I was able to pronounce him out of danger.

How poor Parkyn raved as his fever and delirium rose! No one but myself knew the story of his wild, ecstatic visions and apparently erratic talk—and I said nothing.

During his illness I had occasion to open Parkyn's trunk. While rummaging about in search of his wearing apparel, I found the pictured dream of his artist days. I knew then how powerful was the shock that made my poor friend, in intent, at least, a murderer. I care not what the world may say of the vagaries of foolish old doctors and the maunderings of aged, would-be philosophers; I care not who may doubt;—I held in my hands the picture of the beautiful subject of the dissecting hall. Beautiful beyond the power of pen or tongue to portray, realistic to a living, breathing, sentient degree, I beheld the portrait of the original of the lifeless clay which was the central figure of the romance of the dissecting room.

When Parkyn recovered from his illness his mind was a blank, so far as his artistic training and the romance of the picture and corpse were

concerned. I concealed the picture, deeming it unwise to revive dangerous memories in his mind. It remained in my possession for several years. I kept it hidden because it seemed a sacrilege to permit it to be gazed upon by the eyes of the commonplace. My office was finally destroyed by fire, and I confess that I was not sorry when I discovered that the trunk which contained the painting was not among the properties saved from the flames.

Parkyn became a plodding practitioner in a little country town in New York State. I visited him some years later, and found that his ideals were represented by a short, dumpy, motherly, little red-headed wife and half a dozen tow-headed, freckle-faced youngsters that looked for all the world like turkey eggs and jack o' lanterns.

A MATTER OF PROFESSIONAL SECRECY

The day had been a trying one. Four capital operations, between the hours of eight and ten in the morning, fifteen minutes for washing up and changing back from the rubber and white duck of the operating room to my ordinary habiliments, and with my usual fear that I was still redolent with the fumes of ether and that sickish odor of the combined horrors of blood and iodoform, I was off for my clinic at the medical school as fast as my team of thoroughbreds could take me.

A strenuous hour of teaching and, my nervous force already nearly exhausted, although my day's work had just begun, I hurried to my office, taking barely enough time *en route* to swallow a hasty lunch. And then came an afternoon of arduous office work, with, it seemed to me, more patients and more tough problems and petty annoyances than usual.

My office hours over, I was privileged to spend a half hour at dinner, before attending to several

consultations. I wound up the day by calling at the hospital and looking over the cases I had operated in the morning, and was then driven homeward, fairly worn out, by what was, after all, merely an average day in the life of the college professor.

It was long after midnight when I retired, congratulating myself, meanwhile, that I had completed and forwarded to the publisher the last batch of MS. for my new book, and was therefore privileged to rest my weary bones and exhausted brain.

A telephone at one's bedside is sometimes a great convenience for the physician, but there are occasions when to me it seems an invention of the devil—a something devised especially to defeat the ends of tired nature—a sort of Nemesis, which pursues one into the very midst of dreamland. When I am as tired as I was on this particular night, the ringing of my telephone bell awakens me with a sudden physical and mental shock that sets my every nerve a quiver, and makes my heart beat like a trip hammer for many minutes.

With the bell still ringing with impudent insistency, I found myself sitting bolt upright in bed and, I freely confess, swearing to the limit

of my vocabulary of the profane. Having sufficiently identified myself to the party at the other end of the line he said excitedly, "Doctor, you are wanted at once at No.— B— Street. A man is dying. For God's sake, hurry!"

And I stood not on the order of my going.

A handsome young man, apparently about twenty-five years of age, lay writhing in the most horrible agony, and crying, "Water, for God's sake give me some water! I am burning up inside! My stomach and bowels are on fire!"

From time to time frightful paroxysms of vomiting came on, with the ejection of a greenish fluid mixed with blood. His sufferings were frightful to witness. He complained of cold shivers, and his teeth chattered like those of a man with an ague chill. His skin was yellow and parchment like, and his face drawn and cadaverous. His eyes were sunken and surrounded by great dark rings. Their dullness was only redeemed by the gleam of fear and horror of death that shone in their depths.

"Has this man ever before been ill, so far as you know?" I asked.

"Yes, doctor," replied an elderly woman—evidently the landlady, for the ear marks of the cheap boarding house were plain—"this is the

third attack of the kind, only this is the worst one he's had. Until a month ago he was well and hearty. His sickness always comes on in this way, with that funny lookin' vomit, and that burning in his stomach. This is the first time there's been any blood, though. He was all right this morning at breakfast. He didn't come home to dinner, and I think he must have eaten somethin' that didn't agree with him, at one o' them restaurants downtown."

I immediately gave the poor fellow a hypodermic of morphine and requested everybody to leave the room. He grew easier in a few minutes, I meanwhile administering antidotes for what seemed clearly a case of arsenical poisoning.

"My friend," I said, "you have taken arsenic. Why did you do it?"

"No, no," he moaned, shaking his head. "Julie, Julie!" Further than this I could get nothing intelligible out of him.

Another paroxysm of that awful pain came on, and I was obliged to resort to another hypodermic. This paroxysm left him almost pulseless. His skin grew cold and damp, and his eyes assumed that glazed and set appearance

which means but one thing to the professional eye. My patient was sinking fast.

I quickly administered stimulants hypodermically and then called the sick man's friends to his bedside.

"This man is dying," I said quietly to the landlady. "He has but a few minutes longer to live. See if you can get him to say anything about himself."

The woman spoke to the dying man and shook him gently, in a vain effort to arouse his attention. He revived a little for a fleeting moment and shook his head feebly, muttering in barely audible tones, "Tired—so tired—sleepy."

This was the last flicker of his candle of life. I could no longer find the pulse at the wrist. The heart sounds grew feebler and feebler and finally ceased altogether. The face grew gray and ghastly. The eyes were set and dully staring and the jaw relaxed. There was a last convulsive expansion and contraction of the chest and a gasping, strident, laryngeal sound as the breath finally left the poor fellow's body forever. My unfortunate patient was dead!

"What was the matter with him, Doctor?" asked in chorus the people about the bedside.

Long years of experience had brought discre-

tion to this particular warhorse, and so I replied, "Acute gastritis."

I did not propose to tell all I thought I knew, or to issue premature bulletins. I wanted time to think. I scented mystery here, and perhaps crime, and let him who will condemn my taste as a depraved one, such things have always had an overpowering fascination for me.

I knew that some hours would elapse before I would be called upon for a death certificate, and much could be done in the way of investigation in that time. I resolved to keep my own counsel and allow future developments to determine whether or when I should place the case in the hands of the coroner.

But, was the case one of murder or suicide? This question I proposed to solve myself, if I could. I could at least try to do so, before turning the matter over to the authorities. If it were suicide there might be reasons satisfactory to my conscience why I should keep my counsel. There are times when the physician is justified in closing and forever locking the door of the closet that contains the grinning family skeleton. I may be telling tales out of school, but I am not ashamed to say that this has been done by men whom I revere. All honor to the profession that

has the courage to protect the fair name of its *clientele*!

Of course, I had no intention of concealing what I knew, if the case should prove to be at all doubtful, nor was there in this particular case much chance of any circumstances existing which would be likely to impel me to conceal a suicide. Should the case prove to be a murder, I resolved to at once notify the coroner, no matter what the circumstances might be.

I suspected from the history of the case that it was murder, not suicide, with which I had to deal.

One by one the friends and curious neighbors of my late patient filed silently out of the room, till none remained save the landlady and myself. Mrs. Wharton was evidently a simple, kindhearted creature, who had known sorrow of her own and had had experience. She quietly set about performing the last sad offices for the dead, whilst I proceeded to critically inspect the dead man's surroundings.

Mrs. Wharton removed the pillow from beneath the head of the corpse. As she did so a letter fell from the pillow upon the floor, unnoticed save by myself.

The interest excited in my mind by that letter may be imagined. Here was a possible answer to the question I had been asking myself. The opportunity must not be lost. Under the pretext of helping Mrs. Wharton, I succeeded in placing my foot squarely over the letter. To drop and regain my handkerchief, restoring it to my pocket with that much to be desired mis-sive concealed in its folds, was sufficiently easy, even for an amateur.

Before departing for home, I made a few ostensibly casual inquiries regarding the dead man. It appeared that he was a comparatively new boarder in the house, and had said that he had been in the city but a short time. He had not obtained any regular employment, but seemed to have plenty of money, Mrs. Wharton stated, adding, "He was an awfully nice young man, Mr. Peyton was, and everybody in the house liked him."

"Do you know whether or not he was married?" I asked.

"Oh, my, no, he wasn't married!" exclaimed Mrs. Wharton. "I'm quite sure he wasn't, because he had a sweetheart—such a pretty girl, too. That's her picture on the mantel."

I picked up the photograph and found that

the landlady had spoken "by the card"—the dead man's sweetheart was indeed "such a pretty girl," of the dark Spanish type—with a face full of life and passion.

"Ah," I exclaimed to myself, "I'll wager that we have found 'the woman.' Those great dark eyes, that massive head of ebon hair and those full, sensuous lips seem to me to fit into this mystery very accurately."

"Where does the young woman live?" I asked.

"Laws, sir, I don't know where she lives, but I understand that she works somewhere down town. Mr. Peyton used to call for her, so one of the other boarders who used to be here said, nearly every evening at closing time, at one of them big department stores. I don't know which one, for sure, but I think it was the Emporium—or, maybe, it was Wurtzinger's."

I had no doubt as to my ability to recognize the original of the photograph. After making a mental note of the somewhat faded inscription upon the back, I replaced the picture upon the mantel.

"To Hartley, from Julie." Julie was the name that the dead man had spoken, almost in his last agony. Most assuredly I must find Julie.

As may be imagined, after my arrival home I wasted none of the remaining precious moments of the night in sleeping. I fairly dashed into my study, turned on the lights, closed and locked the door instinctively, without rhyme or reason, and proceeded to read that portentous letter:

“Hartley:—

“Why did you follow me to N—? Why can you not understand? Why do you persist in harrowing my very soul in the attempt to bring back by force and arms what no longer exists? I have told you, over and over again, that I no longer love you, and that I love another with all the strength of my being. Of what good could it be to compel me, as you are trying to do, to continue a *liaison* which I have come to detest, and which, had I been more worldly wise would never have been formed? And you threaten to expose me—you, who have nothing to lose, while I—oh, man, man! Why can you not see? And you say you love me, and you reproach me because I have said in the past—that past over which I fain would draw a veil of oblivion—that I loved you. Yes, I did love you—to my shame be it said, the more shame that I now

know that the burning sentiment, the ardent affection you have expressed for me is not love, but the passion of the brute whose life revolves around his own selfish gratification. You will say this is not true, that you do love me, that your love is of the exalted type. For God's sake then, do what you can to show me that I am wrong! By that love, I implore you to do nothing until I see you. Do not bring the girl you have so often called your Julie, to open shame! Oh, Hartley, be not harsh to me! I am the most miserable wretch, the unhappiest being on the face of the earth. Do not drive me to desperation and death. Do not ruin my future. Be merciful, I implore you. In your last letter you threaten to denounce me to my father, that you will send him my letters. Oh, why did I ever write them? Hartley, if my poor old father should ever read those letters, inspired though they were by the truest love, he would put me away from him. He would hate me, now that I am engaged to marry a man of whom he is very fond. I wrote to you in all the ardor of my first love; it was as pure and as true as it was deep, but the world could not, would not understand. I believed you when you said you loved me,

and it was for the love that you expressed that I adored you. I put on paper what I should not. Had my love been one of head and not of heart—had I not believed you the noblest of men, I should not now be pleading for mercy. If my father or Mr. X— should see those fond letters to you, what could I expect but a revulsion of feeling? If any other eyes should see them, what would not be said of me? Oh, on my bended knees I implore you to spare me,—to spare those who love me and whom I love with my whole soul. As you hope for mercy on the Judgment Day, do not inform on me—do not make my name a scandal and a reproach! Oh, will you not keep my secret from the world? For the sake of my mother, for the love you bear your own, spare me! Oh, Hartley, in God's name hear my prayer! I have prayed God to forgive your cruel threats—to inspire you to spare me from shame. For the love of Heaven, hear me! I grow mad! I have been ill, very ill, ever since I received your last awful, threatening letter. I have had to resort to drugs—something I should not have taken, and my brain is on fire. I feel as if death itself would be sweet. Hartley, oh, Hartley; abuse me, villify

me, kill me if you will, but do not denounce me! For my life I am pleading—oh, listen, listen, for—must I say it?—for your own safety hear me. I cannot stand everything. Do not drive me to madness and death—or worse! Have pity on her whom you once called—your Julie.”

As I read this heart rending missive my late patient's case did not seem so mysterious. I do not hesitate to say, moreover, that the memory of his last horrible agonies was pleasanter to contemplate than it had been.

“The man who inspired that letter,” I exclaimed aloud, “never committed suicide. He was not man enough. That fellow died like a poisoned rat in a hole,—if the evidence counts for anything.”

Having thus become more reconciled to the death of the late Mr. Peyton, I was less inclined than ever to be in haste in promoting any legal intermeddling with what had begun to appear a just dispensation of Providence. But I was nevertheless determined to see the matter to its conclusion. I was bound to find the hand that had “poisoned the rat.” I could decide what course to pursue afterward. I was

confident that I knew for whom I must look, but where? Where was "Julie?"

After a hurried breakfast I began my quest. As luck would have it I decided to visit the Emporium first. I confess that when I entered the colossal establishment and saw its large number of female employes I began to fear that, with only the given name of the person I was seeking and a mental reproduction of her photograph to guide me, my task was liable to be something like the proverbial search for the needle in the haystack.

For more than two hours I strolled about the Emporium, covertly studying the faces of the women clerks and affecting an indifference which I did not feel, without seeing any one who could by any possibility have been taken for the original of the picture. Black hair and dark eyes—the possessors of which were not seldom beautiful—were there in plenty, but none that could be compared with those I sought.

I was about to go to the office of the establishment to inquire there, under the pretext of seeking a witness of an accident case, when I caught sight of one of the floor walkers, a Mr. Courtney, who chanced to be an old patient of mine.

"Ah," I thought, "here is some one who may help me."

Mr. Courtney greeted me warmly, and replied courteously, when I asked for a private interview,

"Certainly, doctor, step this way."

Having seated ourselves on a sofa in an out of the way corner of the store, I said,

"Mr. Courtney, for important reasons, which I am sure it will not be necessary to give you, I am seeking a certain young lady, who may or may not be employed in this establishment. I have been compelled to ask your assistance because I have only her description to rely upon, and know merely her given name—'Julie.'"

I then proceeded to describe the young woman of the photograph.

My friend smiled and said,

"Your task is an easy one, doctor. There's only one of her kind, in this establishment, at least. Do you wish to speak to the young woman?"

I was somewhat taken aback by the suddenness with which success promised to reward my search.

"W—why, yes, if it would not be too much trouble," I replied.

Mr. Courtney rapped sharply for a messenger, and one promptly appeared.

"Tell Miss Morales, in the lace department, that I wish to see her here at once."

The messenger departed on his mission, leaving me wondering how I had missed seeing the object of my quest. I recalled having lingered for quite a while at the lace department.

The messenger did his errand quickly and returned.

"Please, sir, Miss Morales is at home sick. The lace department manager says she hain't been down to the store for three or four days."

"Why," exclaimed Mr. Courtney, "come to think of it, I haven't seen her for several days. I had made no especial note of her absence, however, as there are so many women employes in the store, and the lace department isn't on my floor. If you wish, doctor, I will ascertain where she lives. We keep a record of the residences of all our employes, you know."

Mr. Courtney went to the office and returned with a card upon which was written, "Miss Julie Morales, No.— M— Street."

After thanking my friend and asking him to consider my inquiry as of a confidential nature, I wended my way to the address given me.

No.— M— Street proved to be located some distance from the business part of the city. The house presented the semi-respectable appearance of a boarding-house of the cheaper grade. A smirking, frowsy, freckle-faced Irish maid opened the door in answer to my ring, and informed me that "Miss Morales was to home" and she "guessed," in her room.

The maid ushered me into the stuffy, cookery smelling parlor, dusted a rickety, shabby genteel, hair-cloth covered chair with her apron, and asked me to be seated.

"Who shall I be after tellin' Miss Morales as wants to see her?"

"Never mind my name. Just tell her I am from the Emporium."

The maid soon returned and informed me that Miss Morales would be "down in a little while."

I had begun to grow somewhat restless, and was wondering whether the fair Miss Morales had not become suspicious and eluded me, when there was a soft rustle of skirts in the hall, the door opened, and there stood the original of the photograph—hollow eyed, wan and haggard, with deep care lines about the

mouth, but still undoubtedly "Julie," and still surpassingly lovely.

"You wished to see me, sir," she said, in a voice which was somewhat tremulous, and unquestionably that of one who had suffered much.

"Miss Morales, I believe."

"That is my name, sir."

"I owe you an apology for the little deception," I said, handing her my professional card. "As you see, I am not from the Emporium, although I obtained the address from my friend Mr. Courtney, at that establishment."

Her hand trembled as she took the card, and she gazed at it fearfully, as though apprehensive of danger.

"Shall we not be seated?" I asked, motioning to a settee. The young woman acquiesced, almost mechanically. Seating myself beside her, I said:

"Miss Morales, while I am a total stranger to you, I wish you would not construe my visit and what I am about to say to you as either impertinent or menacing to yourself. I am here with the best of intentions, but I must discuss with you a matter which, you may be assured, is of vital importance to you.

Anything you may say will be treated by me as strictly confidential—as, in short, a professional secret.”

She gazed at me helplessly, with the dumb, haunting dread of impending disaster in her beautiful eyes.

“You are, or have been, I believe,” I continued, “a very close friend of Mr. Hartley Peyton’s.”

The poor girl’s face became ghastly pale, and I feared she was going to faint, as she stammered, weakly,—

“Ye—yes, sir. We are, or at least we were, friends—we were very good friends.”

“Well,” I continued, “it may interest you to know that I was called to see him professionally last night, and found him very ill.”

“Then he is much better now; he is quite recovered, is he not, doctor?” she exclaimed eagerly, springing to her feet.

“I regret to say that he is not better. In fact,” I replied, “Mr. Peyton is —”

“My God, doctor!” she cried, “he is not dead?”

“Miss Morales, Hartley Peyton died at two o’clock this morning.” The young woman

buried her face in her hands, and fell back upon the settee in a state of almost total collapse.

"Miss Morales," I continued, "the point which mutually interests us is that the circumstances surrounding Mr. Peyton's death were very peculiar and unusual, in fact, suspicious in the extreme. I will go further and state that I have formed a very definite opinion of the cause of his death."

Thrown completely off her guard by fright, the poor girl moaned, "Oh, doctor, you surely do not suspect that I—you surely do not believe that I could ever have—"

"I am not at present expressing any views as to the peculiar agencies which acted directly or indirectly in causing the unfortunate man's demise. I have merely stated to you the fact of his death, and that I have arrived at a certain conclusion as to the cause of it.

"Miss Morales, you may place the most implicit confidence in me in anything you may say to me. Any communications you may make shall be held sacred. I have not as yet discussed the unfortunate affair with any one but yourself. It may rest entirely with you as to whether or not I do so hereafter."

"What do you wish me to do—what am I to say?" she asked, faintly.

"Nothing here," I replied. "Your present surroundings are by no means favorable to discussion of topics of vital importance, least of all to confidential communications. I shall therefore take the liberty of asking you to come to my office"—I looked at my watch, and saw that my office hours were long past due—"at ten o'clock to-morrow morning."

The girl suddenly dropped her hands from her face, straightened up in her seat, and, with the gleam of battle in her wonderful eyes, said, tensely,

"Why should I feel called upon to make an appointment with you, an entire stranger, for the purpose of discussing a matter which, after all, does not in the least concern me. Mr. Peyton's death, and your opinion of its cause are to me of no consequence whatever. Furthermore, your presence here is in the highest degree impertinent and uncalled for."

"Miss Morales," I said, quietly. "There are several reasons why you should make and keep the appointment I have requested. In the first place, it is optional with me as to whether or not the sudden death of your friend, Mr. Peyton,

shall be turned over to the coroner for investigation. It may prove to be my duty to do so."

"What do I care, whether the case is turned over to the coroner or not?" she replied, her jaws setting combatively.

"Simply because there is no telling in what direction the investigation may lead, nor to whom suspicion may be directed," I retorted.

"Let it lead where it may, for aught I care," she said, defiantly.

"Miss Morales, I will be more to the point. A letter was found beneath Mr. Peyton's pillow, which, should it fall into the coronor's hands, might suggest all sorts of foolish ideas to the minds of the ignoramuses who compose the average coronor's jury—minds to which sentiment is an unknown quantity. The letter was signed, 'Julie,' a signature that corresponds very accurately with one which is inscribed on the back of a photograph of a certain young lady that was found on the mantel in the dead man's room."

The poor girl sank limply back upon the settee, the picture of helpless misery. I laid my hand gently upon her beautiful head, resting it there for a brief moment, and then passed quietly out.

Being somewhat versed in matters psychologic, I had not the slightest doubt that the fair Julie would keep the rather one sided appointment made the afternoon before. I confess, however, that her promptness surprised me a little.

The clock upon my office mantel was just striking the hour of ten, when Miss Morales was announced. I directed my attendant to usher her in, at the same time giving instructions that I was not to be disturbed until further orders.

As my beautiful visitor took the seat I proffered her, I was struck by her calm, composed demeanor. Her poise was perfect, and she showed not the slightest trace of excitement, but responded to my polite "Good morning," as if her business were of the most matter of fact nature.

I leaned back in my chair, saying, "I am very glad you concluded to call upon me, Miss Morales, and assure you that your confidence has not been misplaced. There is hardly any need for preliminaries. Our business together this morning is unpleasant at best, and the sooner it is over the more agreeable it will be for us both, I am sure. You doubtless have

something to say to me apropos of our conversation of yesterday. You will find me a good listener—and a sympathetic one.”

She sat for a moment gazing out of the open window, through which the glorious sun and balmy air of an ideal Spring morning were pouring, then, turning and looking me squarely in the eyes, said, as calmly as though entering upon a discussion of things common place:

“Since you left me, yesterday afternoon, doctor, I have passed through mental and physical agonies which, were I the worst of criminals, should have been sufficient expiation for anything I have ever done. I now feel that nothing which could possibly happen would have any terrors for me—that the worst must surely be over.”

I listened in the greatest astonishment. This was hardly the piteous suppliant I had expected.

“Pray do not think that my sufferings have resulted from the operations of a guilty conscience. I have not reproached myself for having taken advantage of humanity’s inalienable right of self-defense. But I was only a poor, weak woman after all, and the dread of punishment at human hands, even though what

I had done was justifiable before God, terrified me.

"However, I lived through the ordeal of last night, and prospective punishment has now no longer any terrors for me. Face it I will, if face it I must.

"I have not come to offer any arguments in defense of any act I may have committed, nor do I intend to beg for mercy at the hands of the only person who, thus far, is in a position to accuse me of a crime. Still less have I come here for the purpose of telling you my story, for there is really nothing to add to what you already know or have surmised, and it would not be fair to ask me to review the events the culmination of which you witnessed night before last. My soul has been harrowed enough. It has received its baptism of fire. I have come merely to say to you that I do not wish you to compound any felonies with your own conscience, or risk your reputation—or perhaps even your liberty—by protecting one who is an absolute stranger to you, and not entitled to the slightest consideration on your part.

"If, knowing the circumstances—and you must know them, after attending Mr. Peyton professionally and having read a certain letter

—you believe it to be your duty to turn my case over to the proper authorities, I am willing to have you do so, and shall abide by the consequences. I do not say this as one who has no longer anything to live for, but as one who has become reconciled to whatever fate has in store for her.

“It may be incomprehensible to you, doctor, but life and liberty are especially sweet to me—much sweeter to-day, than they were prior—well, just prior to the events of the day before yesterday. I am capable of forgetting the past and enjoying such happiness as the future may have in store for me. For this much, and for the circumstances which led to our acquaintance, I am indebted to the hot Latin blood with which my father endowed me. Last night, the colder elements of my heredity held full sway and I was afraid. To-day, sir, I am a Morales. Had you known my father you would understand what that means.

“Doctor, it is for you to do as your conscience dictates. If you decide that it is your duty to relegate a certain matter to the authorities for investigation I shall not blame you. Furthermore, I shall not attempt to escape, as was my first impulse when you left me yesterday

afternoon. To merely escape punishment would not be enough; I must remain free from suspicion, or life means nothing to me, absolutely nothing!"

The young woman rose from her chair and stood in calm expectancy. Her attitude was so entirely different from what I had anticipated from the character of the letter which I had in my possession, and from what was evidently an exceedingly emotional temperament, that I sat silently gazing at her for some time. I finally rose to my feet and was about to reply, when there came a sharp rap upon the door of my consultation room. I opened the door and found my attendant standing there with a yellow paper in his extended hand.

"Well, what do you want?" I asked, rather impatiently.

"Pardon me for disturbing you, sir, but there's a man here from the undertaker's, with a certificate for you to sign, and he says it is important, because the funeral is this afternoon, sir?"

I took the ominous yellow form from the man, closed the door and returned to my desk. With the paper still in my hand I turned to my fair visitor. She paled perceptibly, and I

fancied, trembled a little, but returned my gaze unflinchingly, although I was sure she knew.

“Game to the core!” I thought.

I turned slowly to my desk, picked up a pen and wrote—“Ptomaine poisoning—Acute Gastritis,” then, without a twinge of conscience, deliberately signed my name to the “yellow peril” and rang for my attendant.

A LEGEND OF THE YOSEMITE

THE LOVE OF TIS-SA-ACK AND TU-TOCH-A-NU-LAH

“Ah-wi-yah—the Beautiful,” she was once justly called. And now that the weight of many, many years bore heavily upon her, the warriors of the tribe, recalling the traditions of the past, still called her “The Beautiful.” But who would ever think that the bent and withered old squaw was once the pride of her tribe? The scorching suns of many summers, and the keen, chilling blasts of many cruel winters had indeed made sad havoc in the beauty of Yosemite’s queen.

No one knew how old Ah-wi-yah was—no one knew when she first came to the valley of Yosemite. There was none of all her people who could recall the time when she was not already very, very old and wrinkled. The most venerable sagamore of the tribe remembered that the old squaw was regarded as the only living relic of an age of by-gone majesty, when he was yet scarcely more than a small pappoose, boarded

and strapped with thongs to his mother's back. He recalled that it was she who smiled upon him, and patted his head approvingly on the glorious and never to be forgotten day when his little hands and feeble arms first drew a slender, feathered arrow to its barbed head, and from a child's bow sent it hurtling on its deadly flight at a startled rabbit that traversed his path. He remembered too, that the venerable Ah-wi-yah, standing erect before her lodge with fiery, flashing eyes, led the wild, fierce shout of triumph when he, grown to the stature of a brave, came home from the warpath with his first scalp. And it was the old squaw who, with her own wrinkled hands, hung the still bleeding trophy on his lodge pole, and foretold that the ghastly, gory emblem of his valor would have many, many children.

Yes, Ah-wi-yah was very, very old—so old that she recalled the time when the fair Po-ho-ho waterfall was but a silvery, gleaming ribbon no larger than a stalk of maize—so old that she remembered the days when the Mission Fathers had not yet come to the Land of the Golden Sunset.

White as the snows of the Sierran winter was the hair of Ah-wi-yah, but her eye—so won-

drous dark—was bright and piercing beneath her shaggy, wrinkled brow, and her voice was sweet and flute-like; clear as a wandering echo amid the towering, craggy hills of the smiling beautiful valley wherein her tribe had lived and died for unnumbered ages.

Ah-wi-yah was often the counsellor of the chieftains of the tribe for, squaw though she was, she alone knew the records of the more glorious and war-like past of her fast diminishing kindred. The old squaw lived not in the dull and spiritless present, though her aged tongue was wise and crafty. She lived in the glorious olden days, that wondrous, shadowy past that held for her such memories of long vanished greatness—and who knows what sweet and tender romance?

When I, a curious tourist, wished to study the wonderful traditions of the tribe, the warriors said: "Oh pale face, there is none left to tell thee of our glorious and deathless past but Ah-wi-yah, the Beautiful. In the vast storehouse of her unfailing memory there are many marvellous and beautiful legends. Go to her—the wise old squaw—she will tell them to thee, we doubt not gladly."

And the white haired squaw with the flute-like

voice told me many thrilling, beautiful legends of the days when her tribe was strong and mighty—the days when the Manitou never forgot his chosen people, the children of the lustrous Sun. Of all the legends that Ah-wi-yah told the wondering pale face, there was none so beautiful as the love of Tis-sa-ack and Tu-toch-a-nu-lah. This I will relate just as the wonderful storyteller, who has long since been gathered to her fathers, and whose fragile bones are now mouldering in a dark and gloomy canyon of the towering Sierras, told it me.

“The memory of man, O Pale Face, goeth not so far back into the distant past as the happy days when the children of the glorious Sun first built their blazing council fires in the beautiful, mountain locked valley of the Yosemite. In that unremembered time the baleful glitter of the white sails of the accursed, marauding pale face had not yet defiled the pure blue waters of the broad Pacific. The Sierras were illumined by the red glare of the watch-fires of a mighty, heroic race of red-men, and the waters laughed and sang in joyful cadence with the dancing of their light canoes.

“And in those joyous days the Manitou smiled

upon his chosen people, for they were as yet pure, and uncontaminated by the conflicting creeds, multitudinous diseases, bad fire-water and worse morals of the wicked white man. The Indian was a fearless, noble warrior and a man, roaming the trackless woods and traversing the waters of his ancient ancestral home as free as the wild birds of his native hills.

“In that far distant time happiness hovered like a golden cloud over the lodges of the redman, for within all was peace, and comfort, and plenty. Neither cold nor hunger came like an evil spirit to bring woe to the redman’s bosom. The forests were alive with mighty game, and he was a poor and lowly hunter indeed, who could not show that acknowledged badge of fearless courage, a necklace made of the cruel claws of the fierce grizzly bear. The lakes and streams were teeming with glittering fish, in number like the falling leaves of the yellow autumn, many-hued and brilliant as the rainbow.

“For him who fain would seek for glory, there was many a gory scalp lock to be fairly and hazardously earned in fierce, relentless battle, while for the feeble, timid spirit who shrank from the hardships and dangers of war, the warm and

fertile soil promised the husbandman rich rewards of nutritious maize.

“On the green-verdured slopes and in the broad, smiling valleys gleamed many a comfortable wigwam of poles and dried skins of wild beasts, wrought with the weird hieroglyphs of the tribe—strange, ancient characters and picture-writing, unintelligible even to the Indian of to-day. The smoke of a thousand lodges rose and mingled with the snowy vapor—the fleeces of the sky—mingled with the billowy flocks and herds of the Manitou.

“The valley of the sparkling Yosemite—that wonderful stream of liquid silver whose mystic source is in the clouds, far, far beyond any trail of man—was the earthly paradise of the redman of the mountains. To say that the great ineffable Beyond—the land of Manitou the Mighty—was fairer than the beauteous valley of the Yosemite, was the utmost limit of the Indian’s faith in heaven—those Happy Hunting Grounds to which death alone could transport him. Aye, it was the farthest limit of the redman’s imagination.

“Chief among the sachems of his tribe, was Tu-toch-a-nu-lah. Tall was he, like the tower-

ing redwood; strong were his limbs like those of a mighty oak; rugged were his broad shoulders as the frowning, beetling cliffs of the mountain locked home of his people. There was none so bold and so brave as he—the mightiest hunter and most daring warrior of all his tribe. Within his lodge there hung the scalps of countless enemies, and the claws of many a savage bear of the mountains. Brave? Had he not slain by a single blow with his keen hunting knife the terrible panther—alone and single-handed had he not slain him? And where was the lodge that was large enough to hold the wide, branching horns of the kingly elk he had brought panting to the earth with his deadly, slender-shafted arrows? Straight was his handsome form as the ashen spear-shaft, and elastic as the bow of hickory; swifter was his moccasined foot than the red deer's; lighter his step than the mountain lion's; bright was his piercing eye as the first beams of the rising sun; keen was his vision as that of the king of birds—the great war eagle. There was not among all the Sun's brave children a chief so nobly grand as he.

“Far up on the side of a steep, wooded mountain was the home lodge of Tu-toch-a-nu-

lah. Here, like an eagle in his cloud-kissed eyrie, he watched over the welfare of his people as became a wise and mighty sachem who loved them and was well beloved by them.

“Beloved by them? Aye, and passing well, for he was their loyal, ever-ready champion, their benefactor and protector, and they—being red, not white—were grateful.

“Ranging over the fertile upper plains, the mighty sachem herded droves on droves of the graceful red deer, that his people might choose the best and fattest for the feast. High up amid the rocks were his flocks of big-horned mountain sheep—the picturesque and shaggy cimarron. The savage bear he gave not peace, for he drove him forth from his rocky lair that the braves of the tribe might win laurels in the hunt.

“Sometimes, when the skies had been unkind and the Sun Father had scorched the delicate leaves and fragrant blossoms and shrivelled the tender stalks of the young maize for many days, the wise and thoughtful sachem brought forth the magic red pipe he had fashioned in the far off land of the fierce Dacotahs. As he silently sat and smoked the sweetly pungent killikinnic, the billowy clouds of sweet incense

were gently wafted to the sapphire skies and kissed them, so tenderly and lovingly that they wept for very joy. And those blissful tears fell as a soothing, gentle rain upon the drooping maize, and trees and flowers, until they raised their fainting, almost dying heads in joy and gladness. Then the vast choirs of brilliant-hued singing birds awoke once more the musical echoes of the sighing forest, and sweetly sang the praises of the mighty Tu-toch-a-nu-lah, bravest and most tender-hearted of his race—greatest of all the proud and haughty Yosemite.

“When the drought was over and the parched and thirsty soil was once more moist, the fragrant smoke billows of the magic pipe floated blithely, airily up to the fiercely glaring sun and brought down millions of warm, yet softened rays through the clear blue air that soon ripened the luxuriant crops into gold—gold that the joyful women should gather with singing and merry making in the harvest-time to be.

When the mighty sachem was happy, and laughed, the Yosemite danced and sparkled in the sunlight as though rejoicing with him, its winding way rippling into pleasant, cheery smiles. When he sighed, the sighing wind

wailed mournfully through the cone-laden boughs of the tall bread pines, or howled dismally down the dark and gloomy canyons like the spirit of some tortured brave. When he spake, his voice was sometimes like the soft, gentle cooing of the ring-dove, at others like the deep, sonorous voice of the cataract. But when he raging smote to death the giant grizzly, or fiercely tore the scalp lock from the skull of an enemy, his fearful war whoop rang out among the crags and gorges of the Sierras like the loud mutterings of the thunder, aye, like the awful rumbling and crashing of the earthquake.

"None there was in his tribe so learned as Tu-toch-a-nu-lah, for the smoke of his pipe oft brought him wonderful visions that the eye of none other ever saw. Through the blue, odorous haze of the burning killikinnic the Manitou had many a time spoken words of wisdom to his favorite child.

"And the noble sachem had travelled much. The soft tread of his moccasined feet had been felt by all the land from Oregon to the gulf, north and south, and from the Father of Waters to the blue Pacific, east and west. The broad prints of his snow shoes were upon the eternal snows of every land in the ice bound north.

He had been in the far off Northland where, on a throne of glittering ice, robed in a mantle of ermine frost, sits the Queen of the Heavens. And he had seen crouching at her feet the great White Rabbit—with his own eyes had he seen it. There he had walked through the valley of peace and plenty, in the land where the year is but a night and a day. He had passed reverently among the graves of his ancestors, who lay there sleeping beneath the green mantle that the eternal snows could not chill. He had communed with that sleeping race of giant redmen and had heard them whisper of the day when time shall be no more, when the enemies of his race shall have passed and those mighty warriors shall arise to claim their long lost birthright.

“And Tu-toch-a-nu-lah knew the message of the north wind as it whistled among the mountains. To him spake the giant redwoods, as they battled with the gales of winter. And they spake of battles won in other days, for within those forest monarchs were imprisoned the souls of his forefathers, those red kings of aforetime. To him sang the robin in the springtime, and he heard and understood the twitter of the snowbird, in the days when

Winter had laid his frosty fingers upon the verdant valley. For him the pines and cedars gave forth their balmy breath and fragrant balsam. He was Nature's best beloved child and his mother was kind to the sachem.

"He it was who taught the boys of his tribe to catch the fish with hooks of bone in summer, and to kill them with the spear through the icy coverings of the streams in winter. 'Twas he who taught them how to make the bow and the barbed and feathered ashen shafts that should slay the grizzly and their foes among the redmen. And when the bows and shafts were done 'twas Tu-toch-a-nu-lah who led them into the sombre, fragrant woods and taught them to stalk and slay the deer. He was the children's best friend and wisest counsellor.

"Yes, he was a brave and mighty warrior, and a wise one.

"Tender hearted and loving though he was, the great heart of Tu-toch-a-nu-lah had never been touched, be it ever so lightly, by love of woman. Strong and tireless in the chase, brave in battle, wiser than the wisest at the council fires of his people, kind and loving to all, the mighty warrior knew not yet the

burning, all consuming glow of the most sacred fire that burns on human altars—he knew not the fire of passion. Of all the dark-eyed maidens and comely squaws of his tribe, there was none whose bright and longing eyes had ever aroused in his bosom the glorious and all-responsive thrill that might have bid her hope. Gaze upon him as yearningly and tenderly as she might, there was not one who could say that she was the woman whom fate had set apart for him.

“No, the handsome sachem had never known the love of woman—and yet the star of human destiny was ever hovering over his beloved head, and was soon to illumine with its fiery darts the utmost depth of the still, dark waters of romance that lay hidden within his soul.

“There had been a long and parching drought, and the delicate leaves and blossoms, and the tender heads of the young growing maize were drooping in weakness and sorrow, when from his lofty mountain lodge came forth Tu-toch-a-nu-lah. In his hand he held the magic calumet. Seating himself on a rocky height whence he could smile down upon his faithful people, he smoked, and blew the perfumed clouds

toward heaven. It was early in the morning, and the red-glowing Sun Father was just rising from behind the mountains, his thirsty beams greedily drinking the lovely diamond-like dew-drops that tremblingly hung upon the verdure of the valley.

"At the further end of the valley was a mighty gray dome of time-worn granite, smooth and round as though made and polished by human hands. As the circling smoke rings rose from the sachem's calumet, the gentle breeze bore them slowly to the southward, where they lingered in fantastic wreaths about the dome. The sun gilded with its brilliant beams the rocky summit and pierced the hovering clouds of perfumed pipe smoke as with golden arrows. The dome was surrounded as it were with a splendid halo, such as the chieftain had never before seen. As he gazed, the sky above the dome was illumined as by a gigantic, surpassingly beautiful rainbow.

"The smoke now faded away and there in a blaze of golden glory sat a maiden! Beautiful was she, beyond all the women Tu-toch-a-nu-lah had ever seen. She was not like the dusky, dark-eyed, raven-haired maidens of his tribe, for her skin was like the warm and radiant glow

of the fiery setting sun on the calm still waters of the blue Pacific. Red were her cheeks like the roses of the valley. Her hair, like the ripened maize in autumn, fell over her white shoulders and about her lovely form as falls the sparkling spray of the beautiful cataract—the Bridal Veil, Po-ho-no—like golden water rippling over rocks of silver. Shining fair was her brow as though illumined by the pale, soft beauty of moonlight, and deep and dark was the liquid blue of her eyes, like the shaded pools of the verdant valley, far, far below. Small and shining was her foot, like a tuft of feathery snow twinkling through the boughs of the pines and firs in winter—like the spring of a fairy bow was its graceful arch. Over her dimpled, ivory shoulders fluttered two delicate wings of rose-like cloud. As his eyes fell upon her she called to him. Sweet and sad was her voice as the call of the night bird of the forest.

“The Sachem sprang to his feet and stood and gazed in speechless wonder. The precious red calumet fell unheeded to the ground, whence it bounded off the rocky ledge and went clattering down to a fragmentary fate on the cruel jagged rocks below.

“The beautiful maiden smiled upon him, and

whispered softly as she held out her arms lovingly, entreatingly toward him. 'I, thy Tis-sa-ack, am here. Oh, Tu-toch-a-nu-lah, come'—then gliding swiftly up the smooth and dangerous rocky dome, she vanished over its rounded top.

"As springs the startled deer from his leafy covert in the woods, so, with heart aflame, sprang Tu-toch-a-nu-lah in pursuit of the lovely maiden. Swift and sure of foot was he like the panther of the mountains, alert was he of ear like the wolf of the prairie, keen was his eye as that of the eagle, yet hopeless was his pursuit. The soft and beautiful down from her snowy wings was wafted back, veiling her from his enamored eyes and enveloping him in a feathery cloud denser than the mist of the morning. When the mountain breeze had borne the obscuring cloud away and he could once more see, the maiden had disappeared. There was naught upon the dome but a rosy haze that was fast dissolving before the merciless rays of the Sun Father. Far below him he saw the smoke of the cheerful camp fires of his people—the people who loved him and whom he loved. But he turned again and gazed longingly at the rocky dome.

"So fell the wise and mighty chieftain before

the arrows of all conquering Love. He at last was as other men—touched by the divine fire.

“The ardent passion of new found love leaves room for no other sentiment, and his people soon found Tu-toch-a-nu-lah sadly changed. He went no more upon the hunt or fierce foray; the savage bear no longer cowered and trembled at the dread sound of his footstep amid the mountains; his enemies blanched not, nor quaked with fear at the thunder of his voice. The sachem was no longer the wise counsellor and devoted ruler; he was like a new and strange being, and his neglected people marvelled much, and beheld the change with sorrow.

“Every morning was Tu-toch-a-nu-lah to be found eagerly wending his way to the rocky dome where he first saw the lovely Tis-sa-ack. He laid love offerings of wild flowers and the fruit of the bread pine upon the rocky dome, and awaited her coming with all the ardor of one upon whose heart love has but newly smiled. But only when he was far distant from the dome on which she sat enthroned would the beautiful maiden appear before his dazzled vision.

“Pursue her as quickly as he might, he caught

her not. He heard but the faint and far-away sound of her footsteps, gentle as the falling of an autumn leaf, and the soft rustle of her wings as the unpitying wind blew their snowy, bewildering down into his longing eyes. He might devour with passionate glances her beautiful, shining form; he might in thought revel in her glory of golden hair; he might even look from afar into the limpid depths of her gentle blue eyes, yet was he never to clasp his loved one to his bosom. Struck dumb by her wondrous beauty, never did he speak before her, and never again did her sweet-toned voice fall like the tinkle of rippling brooks upon his enamored ear.

“And with the full blossoming of the flower of love in the heart of the sagamore came neglect of duty. His all absorbing passion swallowed up all regard for the welfare of his people—all remembrance of the beautiful valley for which he had ever so tenderly cared. The world was lost and found in Tis-sa-ack. So all consuming was his passion for her, so constant his thoughts of her, that the crops of Yosemite were neglected—aye, forgotten, and they, being without rain and deprived of his tender care, drooped their delicate heads mourn-

fully and shrank away and died. The breezes whistled and sighed sadly through the juiceless blades of the wild corn that rustled in shrivelled dry response that had naught of life in it. The grass and leaves lost their freshness and turned autumnal brown—sure harbinger of death. The flowers lost their freshness and beauty and their petals fell to the dry earth, one by one, while the bee no longer stored sweet honey in the hollow trees.

“Dazzled were the eyes of Tu-toch-a-nu-lah by the shining wings, golden hair and ivory throat of the beautiful maiden, and he saw none of this. Love had blinded him to all save its object.

“But the fair Tis-sa-ack looked down upon the unhappy neglected valley with eyes of sorrow, as she stood in the early morning upon the mighty dome. As she gazed she wept with compassion, and kneeling down on the smooth, unfeeling rock she besought the Great Spirit to be merciful unto the beautiful valley of Yosemite and bring forth again the beautiful flowers and green trees and shrubs, the delicate grasses, nodding firs and waving maize.

“Then, with an awful crash as of thunder, beneath her feet the great dome was riven asunder,

and the melting snows of the Nevada gushed through the wonderful gorge as if by magic! A lovely lake formed between the steep walls of living rock, and a gently murmuring river started therefrom on its meandering, life-giving course through the parched and thirsty valley.

"And then came a wonderful transformation. The valley was infused with new life. The flowers and trees, the withered grass and the yellowing maize raised their dying heads and smiled with joy as the stream of life crept silently through the parched soil at their shrunken roots. The breeze was laden with the perfumed thanks of the blossoms; the freshened blades of the wild corn rustled and shivered with pleasure as the moisture laden air softly caressed them. The mighty trees were thrilled with delight as the sap, with velvet footfall, ran up their trunks, bringing life and energy and renewed vigor. All was peace and happiness again, and the valley of the Yosemite was once more verdant and beautiful.

"But the mysterious maiden, for whom the valley had so sadly suffered—she who had so successfully appealed to the Manitou—was seen no more. As she flew swiftly as flies the swallow, away toward the western skies, there to

fade from the sachem's sight forever, myriads of delicate downy tufts were wafted from her lovely wings. They fell upon the margin of the new and beautiful lake, and where they fell may to-day be seen thousands on thousands of fragrant little white violets.

"And Tu-toch-a-nu-lah is still wandering sadly about the world seeking her whom he loved and lost. Ere he left his ancestral home, to return no more, that the noble race of Yosemite might never forget him he carved the outlines of his god-like head upon the haughty rock that bears his name. There it will forever stand, steadfastly gazing toward the dome whereon he found and lost Tis-sa-ack, the beloved—the first and last love of his noble heart.

"Sometimes, when the fragrant morning breeze sweeps gently round and round the rocky dome, the maidens of the Yosemite whisper one to another, saying:

" 'Hark! Tis-sa-ack the loved and lost one, is calling the brave Tu-toch-a-nu-lah.' "

A GREAT CITY'S SHAME

Over the entrance of what was once the Iroquois Theater, hangs a head, which the sculptor probably intended for the Goddess of Music. As I gaze upon the head its outlines become first blurred and then transformed. A Death's head stands out in bold relief! The noble image of the Indian Chieftain that was once there, has been consigned to the Limbo of the Forgotten—to the Valley of Dead Lumber. The Death's head grins and grins—grins sardonically. One can almost hear a chuckle, as the horrid thing looks down upon the heedless, hurrying crowd in the busy street. Seeing the thing above the door as I passed by in the midst of the throng to-day, I wondered why it grinned,—why it did not weep. Did it grin because it knew how soulless were the human things that inspired the hand which carved it; because it and the men who placed it there were of the same brotherhood of ghouls; because it felt that it was a grim satire upon humanity?

Have men whose hearts are adamant, whose souls are sordid, the right to stamp their own shamelessness upon a helpless block of stone; the right to hang it where it must perforce reflect their own cold, calculating, emotion defying inner consciousness upon the man in the street?

Beneath the grinning head, and flanking it below on either side, are impudently assertive, glaring legends that proclaim in lurid blatant type—"The Iroquois is no more." The new temple of Thespis which, Phœnix like, has risen from the ashes of the old, is a "Music Hall."

More harshly grating than all is the legend which announces that the new place of amusement will open to-night. Thus have insensate paint, paper and ink become accessories to a crime.

Yes, to-night the theater re-opens. "Refined Vaudeville" with a "Galaxy of Stars," the bill boards say. And as the players caper about and sing, dance and perpetrate their quips and jokes, will they not see? They will gaze out upon the audience that applauds, and how can they fail to see the wraiths of that other audience? They will all be there, those ghostly

ones. Sitting bolt upright where they died, piled row upon row in the aisles, massed in bewildering tangles at the doors—those delusive doors that would not open—they will all be there. And will *they* applaud, think you?

In this commercial age there is little room for sentiment. A people that will permit the fair face of Nature to be disfigured by the painter of patent medicine ads; that will gaze calmly upon a pictured ham or the announcement of the birth of a new "liver-pad" on the Palisades; that will tolerate on our boulevards flaming advertisements of the latest thing in corsets or "union suits," is not likely to protest against a Death's head that merely grins over the gate of a charnel house. And yet the people know. They have read of the awful things that lie behind that awful grin. Many of them have suffered, still more have seen. A few, a very few, go by on the other side of the street with suffused eyes averted, and great sobs of agony welling up in their throats.

"An' I should live a thousand years," I could not forget. Many horrible sights had I seen; much suffering had I witnessed; the faces of the dead had long since ceased to be a novelty to me and were no longer awesome;—I fancied

I had grown callous. But that awful fire! Would that I could blunt the memory of it. Would that I might shelve it as but another experience in the land of Work-a-day.

As I looked upon the Death's head, it seemed to single me out from the crowd, leering at me triumphantly. Did it note my emotion and gloat over it?

I raged inwardly and was tempted to—But, had I seized a paving stone and smashed that vile image to bits, I could not have made them understand. Least of all could I have compelled the understanding of that huge policeman, who stood idly by, swinging his club in a way that suggested danger to sentimental cranks. When that team of horses swung around the corner, narrowly missing a woman who, bundles in arms and children at her side, was frantically trying to cross the street, the officer was gazing at a figure of Gambrinus in the saloon window across the way. He had appetites, but no sentiment, that man in blue.

Standing there in the street, jostled and elbowed by the surging crowd that had no time for dreaming, there rose before me a picture which the Death's head also saw;—its expression showed that.

When on that fateful afternoon the call came for physicians to succor the hapless victims of that pitiless massacre of the innocents, there was no hesitancy upon the part of all who were within call. They hastened to respond, and stood not upon the order of their going. Humanity cried for aid—that was enough. When I arrived at the scene, only a few moments after the occurrence of the frightful disaster, the firemen had just forced their way into the foyer. The air within had begun to be barely breathable. Noticing several firemen groping their way up one of the marble stairways, I followed them. The air was so full of pungent smoke that objects were with great difficulty to be made out. At the top of the stairs, on the landing just outside the only door that was open in the front of the theater, the firemen met with an obstruction—a solid, monstrous cube of human bodies, as high as one could reach. This ghastly mass of bodies was free upon two sides—at the upper steps of the main stair and at the top of several steps leading to a main balcony within the foyer. On the other side the mass was hemmed in by the wall of the stairway. Behind it were piled the bodies of other human beings who had tried to climb

over those in front and had failed. These last extended from the choked up door almost to the lower balcony rail within the theater. There was another door, but this was closed tight, and staunchly held by a strong lock and a heavy something behind it.

Seeing this wall of bodies I stopped short;—I confess it. The awful shock of it all came over me. For a moment I felt my knees give way beneath me. I grew faint and sick,—and then started back the way I had come. Half way down the stairs I stopped, and pulling myself together went back to duty. And then I stayed, like a soldier who runs away at the first volley of shot, but comes back and fights to the end.

The firemen were pulling at the mass of bodies, vainly trying to dislodge them. Several of the men climbed on top of the awful pile and tried to disentangle the bodies, bruising and crushing the while the upturned faces and helpless limbs with their cruel boots.

Alas! The mass of bodies was not to be untangled until too late, far too late. And yet, the pile was free upon two sides, and it looked easy enough to extricate those who were there. And so we tugged, and strained, and pulled,

and pried at them. "My God!" I thought. "If we can only break the dead-lock and get them started!"

"Break the dead-lock?" Well, perhaps we might have done so if we had worked longer and more systematically. But the firemen said, "It's no use."

A big policeman who stood idly by, too dignified to help in the work of rescue, said to me, "Gwan out o' that!"

"But," I answered, "I'm a doctor. Some of these people *must* be alive. I can't go away without trying to get a body out. If I get only one out we may break the lock."

And again he said, "Gwan out o' that, or I'll—" and he brandished his club menacingly.

And so I went "out o' that." I climbed over the bannister and on to the balcony and attacked the bodies from the other side, unnoticed by the officer and free from interference by the firemen, who had all gone, save two or three whose feet were still grinding and crushing the inanimate forms on the top of the pile.

Again I tugged and pulled at the bodies, this time with better success. Down in one corner of the mass, protected somewhat by the marble pillar forming the arch which

connected the landing with the balcony, lay a little boy of perhaps ten years of age. I drew him out quite easily. He still breathed. Next to him lay the body of a grey haired woman. Her face was gashed across by a blow from the boot of some one caught in the death struggles of that pile. As I dragged her body from beneath the towering mass of death, an opera glass, innocent accessory to murder, fell from her nerveless hand and clattered upon the marble floor of the balcony. She, too, was alive.

Curiosity seekers had by this time entered the building. I impressed several of them into service, and between us we carried the bodies of the old woman and the boy down the stair by which they had climbed to their deaths, to the street, and into the restaurant next door, which was rapidly becoming transformed into a morgue and hospital emergency ward. Leaving the poor creatures to the care of some of my brother physicians, I rushed back to that pile of bodies—to again attempt to break that awful dead-lock.

As I re-entered the door of the theater I heard a man wildly expostulating with several policemen. He madly insisted on entering, and

they as strenuously refused to allow him to do so. His voice seemed familiar, and I turned to look. He sprang past the opposing arms of the officers, grasped me by the shoulders and cried, "My God! man, can't you help me? My daughters are in there somewhere!" He was one of my oldest and dearest friends. I had watched his children grow up from babyhood to childhood, from childhood to womanhood and loved them.

"Surely," I said, "you are mistaken."

"No, no, I am sure!" he cried, in agony. "Help me to find them, oh, help me to find them!"

"Come with me," I replied, as I sprang up the stairs. Pointing to the pile of bodies on the landing, I said, "If they were in the theater at all, let us hope that they have either escaped or are here in this pile. Help me, Harry, let us try to get these bodies free."

Imprisoned in the mass of bodies, hanging several feet above the floor, caught only by the lower limbs, with the head, trunk and arms perfectly free, was the body of a powerful man. Surely this one could be removed. My friend, one of the strongest men I know, assisted me, and we pulled at the body until—well, until

my poor friend weakened and fled. And then two other sturdy men came to my aid, and we tugged at the body until a policeman drove us away. And my dear friend's children were in that heap of dead all the while!

Not until the theater proper was entered, and the bodies that were heaped up behind them removed, did it become possible to remove the dead upon the landing. Oh, the pity of it! There they lay, apparently outside the zone of danger and death. And the hands that would fain have saved them were impotent. Untangle them? Think of a lot of huge angle-worms massed together; give those angle-worms legs and arms to twist and intertwine, hands to grip in the death throes, and heads to interlock, and you may understand. And yet, perhaps not, —I myself could not understand, nor believe, had I not seen.

Looking back upon that awful scene of desolation I can find but one crumb of comfort—only one consolation. At the time I felt that many in that pile of human forms must surely be alive and could be saved, if only they could be extricated. Oh, the horror of the idea! It overwhelmed me then. But now as my mind reverts to that scene of death, I am sure that

very few could have been alive, surer still that none were conscious. I recall that not a sound came from those lost ones. Not a cry for help, not a moan of distress, not even a sigh to indicate that life was still there. Oh, the awful stillness of it all! The stillness of the dead lying on the dripping slabs of a morgue. The stillness of the subjects lying upon the tables of the dissecting room. Even the man whose trunk and head were free gave forth no sound. He was caught only up to his hips. Had he been alive, surely he would have made some sign. He was not crushed, save perhaps as to his lower limbs, and that could not have been mortal. The weight of bodies does not crush limbs as does machinery. No, he certainly must have been dead.

And why did all these people fall upon the landing? Of what did they die?

Plunging in the dark, pell mell through that one narrow door, the poor creatures stumbled down several steps that led from the door to the landing. Cunningly devised trap this—wise architect that designed it. Those who went down, rose not again. They lay crushed by the weight of the tangled up scores of other hapless ones who followed after. A small part

of the crowd, those who were not caught in the tangle, flowed, as it were, over the top. A few, just a very few, thus escaped.

As the helpless creatures lay there in that fearful jam, at the only available exit in the front of the house, the smoke, and flame, and noxious gases were drawn irresistibly to that same door. They too, sought an exit at the front, and found only that death trap. The draught must have been fierce, the flames like a breath from hell. While the still breathing, palpitating mass of crushed and bruised humanity lay there imprisoned, the smoke and gases were sucked through the door into the foyer, diffusing themselves through the writhing human hecatomb, and giving those not yet dead a painless *coup de grace*. How soon it must have been over! How useless the emotions that shook my very soul as I gazed upon the slaughtered ones. And how solacing the conclusions with which calm retrospection has replaced the horrible immediate impressions of the scene itself.

Merciful indeed, the smoke and those noxious gases, especially for those luckless ones who lay on the top of the pile of victims. These were scorched and burned—not badly, but

enough to show that with the death-dealing smoke and gases the flames came also. A fearful gust or two—perhaps only one, and the work was done.

And the scene at the open door of death was but a fragment of the frightful holocaust. Death's barbecue lay behind that heap of bodies. Towering up behind that other front door which would not open, were scores of blackened bodies, some burned and distorted out of all semblance to their living form. Still others sat upright where Death had surprised them. They died in their seats without resistance, overcome doubtless, by the deadly gases.

There, standing erect, like soldiers, packed like sardines, on a stair case behind a locked iron gate, was row on row of dead, who had lost their lives trying to escape from the gallery to join the panic-stricken ones in the lower balcony. Hopeless effort—what matter where they died? As well meet death face to face, there upon that inner stair behind that merciless trap gate, as in that pile upon the landing—perhaps better, who knows?

Over yonder is an "exit," one of many similar delusions. This one leads into a blind hallway. Here again, stand the dead bodies of un-

fortunate beings who died fighting for life against invincible odds.

Scattered about in the aisles between the balcony rail and the death trap "exits"—oh, the mockery of the word!—lay bodies burned to a cinder. Among them lay the body of a noble youth, the son of one of my friends, whose life was so full of promise, so replete with possible future usefulness, so suggestive of future greatness even, that I do not wonder the father was crushed to the earth. I loved the lad, and if, deep down, my friend's grief were tinged with resentment against the ordering of things, I could understand and sympathize.

What foolishness have I attempted here? Describe that scene within the Iroquois? Never was quill wrought, that could do the subject justice! Do you, those curious ones, who idly stood in crowds about the building, watching the poor victims who sprang from the windows in the upper galleries or attempted to pass on a frail ladder to the building across the alley, only to be hurled to the ground and mangled to death or permanent disability, think you could picture it? If so, your storm centers of emotion have no more potential energy than a babbling brook—no more dynamic capacity than the

breeze that ripples a mill pond. Do you, my friend, who stood with gaping mouth, watching the charred, blackened forms brought forth from the maw of hell by the firemen, think you could depict the fearful sight? If so, I can only say: "You did not see."

Within the restaurant, the doctors worked like beavers. They did not always work systematically—that was impossible, in that confused mass of people. Confusion? Ye Gods! Was there ever such another scene? Distracted friends and relatives in search of their loved ones, nurses, doctors, firemen, policemen, and others who were trying to lend a helping hand, all contributed to the seething crowd of excited humanity that packed the place. Then there were the vulgar, bestial ones who stood and gaped sensually at the nudity of the fire victims who were being partially stripped by the doctors in their efforts to save. Yes, such were there, and they were numerous enough to make one blush for humanity. These cursed blots upon the face of nature, these moral monstrosities, and the other morbidly curious beings were alike obstructive. The first might not be killed without process of law, and there was so much to do that time could not be spared

to throw the latter out upon the street. Once I very nearly forgot my surroundings. I asked a man who stood near to help me lift some dead bodies from a table to the floor, to make room for others in which there might still be life. He refused and moved away, saying, "You can do your own dirty work." It was then I so nearly forgot, and said sundry sulphurous things. Had there been time, perhaps I should have entirely forgotten. But I fancy the cur was frightened, for after our brief and forceful interview he started for the door and I did not see him again.

Meanwhile, in the midst of the closely packed throng the stalwart firemen and policemen pushed their way as best they could, bearing the bodies of the dead. The work of rescue was going on very slowly. Even the doctors were not using their skill to the best advantage. In some instances a veritable throng of them were working, or attempting to work, simultaneously upon one body. A clear headed layman grasped the situation and, with the assistance of some of the physicians, evolved order out of chaos. Three doctors were assigned to each table; the police cleared out many of the drones in the crowd, and things began to

move more swiftly. The police in general did excellent work. A glaring exception was a certain well-known captain. Noticing his insignia of office, I asked him to clear away the people who were obstructing the passage of the men who were carrying in the bodies. He replied, "I've got no time for you. Hunt up the man who has charge of the police detail." And then the heartless brute went on gaping and getting in the way along with the rest of the morbidly curious.

I wonder if many realize what it means to see dead bodies so numerous that they might be estimated by the cord. Those who do, may perhaps picture to themselves the harrowing scenes about those tables where the physicians worked. As soon as a body was pronounced dead, it was hurriedly laid aside to make room for a possibly hopeful case. Cases in which resuscitation was accomplished were carried to the waiting ambulances and taken to the hospitals. But, alas! these cases were few.

The bodies were brought to us in a seemingly endless stream. As body after body was pronounced lifeless and laid aside, the piles of dead upon the tables grew higher and higher,

grew until, as I have said, they could only be compared to piles of cord wood.

And what a difference in those bodies! Some were so seared, so blistered and blackened from the fire and smoke, that in the handling of them the skin, and even the flesh, came off in one's hands in great shreds and rolls. A far greater number were so free from mar or discoloration, and their faces were so calm and peaceful that it was hard to believe them dead. Indeed, it was difficult to believe even that animation was suspended. They apparently had just fallen asleep.

And these last were to me the most awful sight of all. The others—well, they were better dead than living disfigured and maimed, and besides, there had at no time been hope for them. But these, ah, these! If only they had not lain so long. A little stimulant for the heart, a few compressions and relaxations of the chest, and the life giving oxygen would have entered their lungs and blood. They would have been saved.

What pathetic incidents there were in that restaurant.

A doctor friend of mine, a big hearted, broad shouldered Nature's nobleman, was pushing

his way here and there through the crowd. I noted him towering above those about him as he jostled the people about, and called to him, "Will you take a table?" But he did not answer. He did not seem to see or hear. He went on through the crowd from table to table and finally disappeared. I marvelled then, for I did not know. Poor fellow, his two daughters, beautiful young women, had gone to the Iroquois that day. He was looking, and looking,—for that which was bound to crush him, and hoping,—ah! hoping against hope, as the sequence proved. His light had gone out—and it has stayed out.

And I have just an inkling of what it all meant to the bereaved ones. I had not yet had time to ascertain whether my own wife and children had chanced to go to the Iroquois that afternoon. I recalled however, that I had taken them to see the same play a few days before, and concluded that they were not likely to attend it again soon, but still—

The horrible doubt had just begun to befog my mind, when a new subject was laid upon the table where I was working. It was the body of a young girl. As I took the first hasty glance at this latest unfortunate, I was almost stunned.

The resemblance to my younger daughter was so startling that I was all but sure it was she. It was but a fleeting moment before I knew, but that ephemeral space of time was enough. And then I understood, oh, so well.

"A father's heart should not be deceived, even for a moment," I fancy I hear some one say. Perhaps not, yet there was one unhappy man in that frantic throng of those who were seeking their beloved ones, whom I beheld, thrice in succession, identifying a strange child as his own. And that father had a heart of hearts, as I have occasion to know.

Lying beneath one of the tables lay the body of a beautiful little girl of about twelve years of age. Fair was she, with golden hair and cheeks still red. A doctor saw her lying there and paused, wondering to himself whether his brethren had worked quite long enough. She surely did not look as if she were dead.

As the doctor stood wondering thus, a group of young lads approached him from the other side of the table. One of them cried appealingly:

"Oh, doctor, won't you please try once more to save that little girl. We know her, and know her folks, and it will kill them if she dies."

Another physician who was passing by, overhearing said, "No use, old man. We worked over her for forty minutes before we gave her up," and he hurried on to another table.

"Oh, but doctor," said one of the boys appealingly, "I just saw her eyes quiver."

"Yes," said another, "and one of her fingers just moved."

"Dear, optimistic little liars," said the doctor afterward, "I just couldn't stand it. I pulled the body off the pile on which it lay, put it on the table, and worked like a horse over it for thirty minutes. And when the poor little chest made a few pitifully gasping sounds under my efforts, the expression of joy and hope on the faces of those lads was wonderful to see.

"And when through sheer fatigue I at last gave up the self imposed task that I knew was hopeless at the beginning, one of the boys approached me and tearfully whispered, 'Please, doctor, won't you tell me your name? We want to see that you get paid for trying to save our little friend. You did just the best you could.'

"And," said the doctor, "I couldn't answer him as I would have done had he been grown up. The poor boy would not have understood. I

just choked up and sputtered, 'See you again, by and by, my boy, I'm in a hurry now.'

"Just think," concluded the doctor, "here was a *rara avis*—a dead person's friend who thought a doctor should be rewarded for doing the best he could."

And when I heard the story I said, "Old fellow, that boy's sentiments were awfully out of place, but who shall say that they were out of tune?"

There are many book-made heroes, but few of real flesh and blood. There was one among the injured ones who were brought in unconscious and laid upon the tables at that restaurant. He was a boy of some twelve or fourteen years of age. He remained unconscious for fully half an hour. Just as the doctors were about to give him up as hopeless, he began to revive, and was soon out of danger. Several policemen approached him.

"What's your name, sonny?" asked one of the officers.

"I won't tell you my name," replied the boy.

"Yes, but you *must* tell me your name."

"But I won't do it, so there now," and the boy set his teeth defiantly.

Curious to know why the boy objected to

telling who he was, I motioned the officers aside and asked quietly,

"Why don't you give the policemen your name, my boy?"

"'Cause," replied the boy, "if I do, my pa and my ma'll hear about my bein' hurt an' it'll scare 'em most to death."

And the boy would not be cajoled until I told him the only way to prevent shock to his parents was to notify them that he was safe. He grasped the situation and smiled happily as he gave his name and started for the ambulance.

Ah, Jimmy Kerwin, you are a thoroughbred, if ever there was one.

But why recall all the details of that frightful disaster—the most awful experience I have ever met with. Have I not told enough to justify the indignation that filled me when I saw the Death's head and read those heartless legends?

The new Music Hall opened last evening as per schedule. I was not surprised to read in the papers this morning that the opening night was a brilliant success. Every seat was sold. The audience was as enthusiastic as it was large. This was well—a smaller audience would not have been a fitting crown to Chicago's

shame and humanity's disgrace. Humanity has glossed itself over with a veneer of what it pleases to term civilization, but primitive man peeps out from beneath its edges and obtrudes itself whenever and wherever the veneer is cracked ever so little. And so, a large audience was to have been expected. The managers of the place well knew human nature.

The applause of that audience was the apotheosis of poor old Rip Van Winkle's lament, "How soon we are forgot." Things inanimate revolted at the sight and sound of it. A drop curtain caught, precisely as that cheap, flimsy asbestos fraud did on that memorable day at the Iroquois. And then the insensate human things remembered—remembered that they were not fire proof. They remembered, not the dead, but that other caught curtain, the flame, the gas, the trampling, crushing, tearing rush of madmen fighting for life, and the farcical exits. They remembered themselves only, and were startled, affrighted, ripe for a panic for a moment, and then—they laughed again!

Human beings seeking gay diversion in a crypt of death, splitting the air of a charnel house with vociferous applause, startling the

ghosts that people the place by boisterous laughter—faugh!

The performance over, the callous ones filed slowly out of the hall, chatting like magpies and discussing the merits of the various features of the performance. They traversed the same road over which the ghastly forms of that other audience were carried. And as the pleasure seekers gaily tripped along, they passed between and over scores and scores of recumbent ghosts. Had the forms of these poor wraiths been more substantial there would have been brushings against them, stumblings over them.

Over the door the Death's head still grinned. Chicago's shame was complete. Her burnt offerings on the altar of Mammon were forgotten.





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